LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
00005641378

WITH THE YANKS IN FRANCE

With the Yanks in France

A Story of America in France

By

VINCENT F. SULLIVAN

Wagoner

58th ARTILLERY, C. A. C.

A. E. F.

Published by

V. F. SULLIVAN & CO.

44 Broad Street,

New York.

OCT 25 1921

To My Buddy
E. V. G.

TO THE DOUGHBOY

Yes, we've travelled the road through Death Valley,
Loaded with shot and shell,
And we've run the gauntlet at Thiacourt,
Through a murderous fire of Hell.

But the chances we took were forgotten,
When we thought of the boys on the Line,
'Midst showers of shrapnel and H.E.,
Always with face toward the Rhine.

We saw you drive on through the Argonne,
Where life wasn't worth a dime,
Fighting up there in the mud and filth,
With cooties and food far from fine.

We'll always remember you—Infantry,
The boys with the pluck and the dare,
We'll always salute and adore you,
Hats off to you, Doughboy—you're "There."

V. F. S.
Thiacourt, Nov. 1, 1918.

FOREWORD

I implore my readers not to be over expectant before reading this narrative. It is but a series of facts that actually occurred during that horrible struggle for the cause of humanity in which most of us participated.

In this story there are no tales of wild dashes over No Man's Land in the face of murderous machine-gun fire, or of furious hand-to-hand encounters with the Prussian Guards, flower of the German Army. There were no spectacular Infantry onslaughts in my experiences; it was just that nerve-racking night-driving, over wet, slippery, shell-torn roads, with little sleep and less to eat.

With no pretense to literary excellence or to logical order, I have written out my experiences, closely following my diary which I kept religiously. I do not contend to be a writer of fiction nor a master of facts in the past war. You can readily see that I am not a widely read gentleman of the grammar nor a learned scholar of the language. Therefore, I ask you to be somewhat lenient with my English and phrasing, pass up my numerous errors in good heart, bearing in mind at all times that I am but a Wagoner and not an author.

Perhaps to some of my readers, it will appear that I have written of a great and just case in a somewhat flippant manner, but I assure you such was not my intention. I have tried to tell my experiences in the language of a truck-driver, sitting behind the wheel, chatting with his buddy.

CHAPTER I

The business was getting tiresome. Everybody was tired in fact, even the clock that hung on the wall in the corridor would get lazy and just stop—tired, that's all. Ponce de Leon, not the Spanish Explorer, but my boss, was one of those "tired business men" one reads so much about nowadays, and the word "rush" was among the missing in his vocabulary.

There was one subject that interested us, and one only, and that was "the War." The World War, the European Tussel, the 1914-1918 Picnic, the Big Show,—that was the only and one subject that interested any red-blooded human at that time and I was just aching to get into it, just aching, and when I ached for a thing, I generally got it no matter what it was. That was the reason why I told "Ponce de Leon," after listening to a military band one fine morning, that he best hang out a shingle for a new clerk as I was going overseas to battle the Hun until Hell froze over. Then I was going to fight them on ice skates.

When I told the folks at home that I was about to go on a tour to France, they threw up their hands in despair. I really expected more. Told me I had no brains, that I was crazy and wasn't old enough to join the army. Nevertheless, I found myself standing beside an Army Recruiting poster in front of City Hall, New York, a

few days later. I was fascinated by a life-size picture of a U. S. soldier with his finger pointing directly at me, under the caption of "Your Country Needs You." A recruiting sergeant seeing me interested in the poster, came over to where I was standing.

"Like to enlist in the army, sonny," he said, laying his hand on my shoulder in a gentle manner. "See the world, eats free and good pay; learn something; don't be a bum, go to France and fight for your Country; it's your Country, you know!"

The bait was nice and I swallowed it, hook, line and sinker. I murmured, "Yes." Without giving me time to reconsider, the sergeant led me upstairs to the recruiting office where a lieutenant presided.

I was greatly surprised to see the number of "customers" awaiting their turn to enlist. There were young fellows and middle-age men, rich and poor, talking about the war and their chances of being in the expected Spring Drive.

After looking at the different posters around the wall, I decided to enlist in the Cavalry. Yes, the Cavalry was my branch. Ride on a horse and wave a sabre over my head. Oh! Boy, that was the cake. No walking, all riding. Anyway, I liked yellow hat cords better than blue or red, they looked so dashing.

In short time I was up before the lieutenant. He asked me how old I was and I told him 18 years, which was correct. He said, "Fine, but

you had better go home and get your birth certificate so that there will be no doubt in the matter."

I raced home like a maniac, secured the certificate as though it meant a million $'s to me, which by luck was in the bureau drawer, and dashed back to the recruiting station. As soon as I gave the lieutenant my birth certificate he got out an enlistment form and placing his finger on a blank line said, "Sign here!"

From City Hall I was sent with a few other recruits, to the Twenty-third Street Recruiting office where I passed my first physical examination successfully. I then received a subway ticket and an order to report to the Receiving Barracks at Fort Slocum, New York, the same day. Before going to the Fort, I thought it best to go back home to arrange my personal affairs, as it were, and break the news to Mother. Upon arriving home, I rushed into the house, hurriedly changed my clothing and after some hasty eats and a last word of parting, I left my home for Fort Slocum, the Army, and a new life.

I reached the Fort about 11 P.M., January 23rd, 1918, and was sadly disappointed. I didn't expect the Colonel and his staff to come down to the dock to greet me but I did expect some one there to show me where I could find a place to sleep for the night and something to eat. After finishing a box of Zu-Zu's for supper a sergeant assigned a bunk and two blankets to me explaining that if I wasn't in bed within ten minutes'

time I would be arrested for staying up after "Taps," which didn't mean a thing to me and I told him so. He threatened me with death.

It was the next morning that I wished I was back in civilian life. The cause for this was having the blankets pulled off me in no gentle manner by an important looking corporal, 5:15 in the A.M. Can you imagine it? This was rather early for me to get up.

The next dazzling experience was to get some icy mess kits, wait on line for over an hour, and then march into a large mess hall which seated about 900, and get nothing to eat. It certainly was puzzling. I remember having a cup of good coffee spilt over me but that was all.

There was nothing to do for ten minutes after "mess." Then we started off at a dash. Injections and inspections; then uniforms, shoes, hats, socks, etc., thrown at us in a heap. I asked for a size 5 shoe and they gave me 8. I didn't want to inconvenience them any by having my shoes exchanged as everybody seemed to be in a hurry.

The following Sunday my brothers, Jean and John, came up to the Fort to look me over; they didn't have to inspect me very much to see that I would never make it and told me that within a week I would be transferred to the 58th Regiment, the outfit to which Jean was attached. Well, I waited a month and one fine morning just as I was about to leave for Fort Ethen Allen, Vermont, in a Cavalry draft, I was informed that the

order for my transfer had been received from Washington, and a week later I embarked on a Government tug for Fort Totten, having been formally transferred from the Cavalry to Battery C, 58th Artilley, C. A. C. At Fort Totten, I found that Batteries C and D had been sent to Fort Schuyler, which was across the Sound, to form the 2nd Battalion of the 58th. After spending four days of leisure at Totten, I received orders to report to Capt. Smith, C. O. of Battery C, 58th C.A.C., stationed at Fort Schuyler, New York.

Bag and baggage I hopped across the Sound on the "General Wykof," arriving at my brother's barracks evening of March 4th.

I must have looked like one of Goldberg's cartoons as I strolled into my brother's barracks, a yellow cavalry cord on my hat, a rookie from canvas leggings to "new issue" overcoat. I finally found my brother and after many introductions to men, meals and bunks, I settled down to army routine. During my stay at Fort Schuyler, I certainly did enjoy army life. Barring a few drills and inspections, I led a life of ease, going on pass two or three times a week.

The rumors on the post changed daily. We were going to China one day, the next day we were listed for service in Alaska, then Panama. Something new every day. All this time as you can imagine, we were getting keyed up for battle. We longed for action and waited impatiently for the day when we would receive orders to move for over-seas.

In the early part of May, 1918, one of my buddies rushed into my tent one night and said excitedly, "Sully, we're off for France the 9th of this month." I thought that he was kidding me but no, the news was buzzing all over the post and the next morning we began preparing for our departure. The news came quickly, in fact, too quickly, as the post was quarantined before Jean and I could get leave to go home and say "Good Bye" to our folks.

CHAPTER II

It was the memorable "Grand Republic" that sailed down the East River with the 58th on board bound for a troop ship somewheres along the Hoboken water front. We were boiling over with the fight spirit as we sailed down the river, the old raft listing from port to starboard as the troops moved from one side of the ship to the other, straining to get a last glimpse of Brooklyn and Manhattan. The weeks of training in the pent up Fort had lifted our morale to the 40th story. Every fibre of our bodies ached for a try at the Hun; we felt then that our regiment, unaided, was capable of turning the tide against the Boche. We gave our pals husky blows across the back and told what we were going to do when we bored our way to Berlin.

"When I get to Berlin town," said a seedy looking reg'lar from Kansas, "I'm going to drop everything else and put in my time hunting for the Kaiser. Remember now, he's my meat, I'm going to settle with that bloody old boy and I don't want any interference."

"You've got no monopoly on this Kaiser killin' job," retorted a militiaman from New York. "You've got to walk fast if you want to beat this buddy out finding the Chief Butcher of Berlin.."

This sort of talk may sound foolish but it showed the excellence of our spirits. We were

ready for anything—the rougher, the better. I believe we were about as reckless an outfit of artillery roustabouts as ever moved toward a battle front.

The old "Republic" finally pushed her nose into one of the Hoboken slips and we were given orders to stand by with all equipment to disembark.

After having coffee and sandwiches issued by the Red Cross, we were marched around the dock to the side of a monstrous ocean liner painted steel gray which later we found out to be the U. S. S. "Covington," formerly the German liner "Cincinnati." At nine that evening, all troops were on board and assigned to bunks and everything was in order for the steamer to pull out. As I was turning over in my bunk about 11 P.M., I felt a sudden jar. My bunkie said, "We're off!" and I dozed off to sleep.

When I arrived on deck the following morning, May 11th, I found that we were out of sight of land and in the lead of a large convoy of troopships, fourteen in number with a battle cruiser, the "Huntington," at our stern. No one on board seemed to know our destination, even the American Navy crew had no positive port to make, although they were betting five to two it was Brest, France. At that time, all troop ships sailed under sealed orders.

The first day or two out we were drilled three times a day for the use of life boats. Five short blasts of the whistle meant submarines or life

boat drill, whereupon everyone clambers up the ladder and stands in front of the life boat to which he is assigned. Each man knows his exact position and must keep it; the Naval officers who carry revolvers are ordered to shoot any man who moves from his place or causes any disturbance which may lead to panic. Then the call, "Abandon ship," is awaited. When it sounds, the boats are lowered by the ship's crew who have their own stations, and then comes the sliding down the ropes. These drills were executed by our boys in good shape.

The life boat drill and target practice by the American gun crews served to break the monotony of the sea.

About the 6th day out, the ship encountered a heavy storm, and I became seasick. That was all. Those of you who have crossed the lake, know what it is. It's not describable. I shall never forget those three days, lying on my back in a bunk while the boat tossed and rocked, pitched, screamed and rattled and did everything but sink. I started a diary on board but I threw it over the rail with my hat and all that was in my stomach. When the storm subsided, I left like a new man but was wondering how I would ever be able to cross that lake to get back to good old America again.

We wormed our way cautiously along, till one evening at dusk, we spied a light on the horizon. It was so long since we had seen a light that we hardly realized what it was. Another light, then

another, until we counted seven and in less than twenty minutes, seven American submarie destroyers were with us. Swift, rakish four-stackers, they circled round us like the interference of a football team, fending off all insidious opponents and reconnoitering in the direction of any object that might come into view on the horizon. With these little "eggshells" bobbing up and down, never out of sight, we found a comforting sense of safety. We didn't sight a single U-Boat all the way over, but we had a lot of fun at the expense of these sneaking craft. Naturally, we were all thinking about subs when we entered the zone, and hardly an hour would elapse when some brainless jokster would yell:

"Hey, boys, there's a sub."

We fell for this bunk like farmers and would crowd to the rail and strain our eyes looking for a periscope.

I was taking my turn at poker one day around noon when the submarine gag was pulled and I took a mean beating. I held a royal flush, without any juggling, something which had never before rubbed acquaintance with me during my brief experience as a poker "shark." I was about to proceed with this poker knockout when a voice screeched at my elbow.

"Hot Dawg! Here comes a torpedo, going to hit us 'midships."

Zowie! I was on my feet in an instant, throwing my cards on the table; the other players followed suit. We did our little marathon to the

rail, only to find out that we were licked again. Nothing but the ocean in sight. When we returned to the table, of course, the cards were all mixed and we had to have a new deal. I spent an hour looking for the wise cracker, but try and find him.

There was only one fly in our ointment on the trip over, and that was our chow. Kick and howl all day long for something to eat and we wouldn't receive the slightest rumble from the naval mess officer. "Irish stew" for breakfast and dinner. Supper was a bright imagination. But the "stew"—sweet onions! it was an insult to the Irish race. A cross between bilge water and tobacco juice. I will never forgive that anarchist who had charge of the mess on the old "Covington." If I should ever happen to meet the gentleman, it will be he and I all over the lot.

The ship was throbbing with excitement on May 23rd, when we sighted a thin blue line on the horizon, the coast of France. Then the rumors started. We were to be sent direct to Germany to ask the Kaiser to surrender. We were also scheduled to bury the dead in Belgium. "Pop" Mattson wanted to bet "bucks" that we would be in the trenches within three days. The rumors kept up until our attention was diverted to three big French airplanes advancing to meet us, flying low and scanning the water closely for hostile submarines. It was a dangerous spot, the entrance of that harbor. Only the day before, we learned later, a German U-Boat had sneaked close in and sunk an American supply ship.

CHAPTER III

It was evident that our approach had been well heralded, for the docks were dense with people and on public buildings, dwellings and warehouses, hundreds of American and French flags were snapping to the breeze. Quaint little French fishing boats swarmed about the transport, and the occupants of these craft were the first to greet us. These fishermen were very picturesque in their rakish, red tam-o-shanters and corduroy trousers rolled up to the knees. They wore a red scarf about the waist and their feet were bare. The faces of these foreign-looking men were wreathed in smiles; they jabbered and gestulated after the manner of the French, shrieking questions at us which we did not in the least understand although we shouted "Yes" to all their queries. One of them became so excited that he forgot all about steering his boat and it rammed another and was upset, throwing the occupant into the water. We threw a line to the capsized fisherman and pulled him dripping and gasping to the deck of the transport. We gave him a hilarious reception, slapping his wet back and shouting, "Howdy, Frenchy." He replied with a torrent of enthusiasm in his own language, and a wide smile unfolded under his queer little eyebrow of a moustache when we filled his hand with American coins. He stayed on the boat until we docked and

did not seem to worry in the least about the fate of his smack which we had left upset in the harbor. I really believe he collected the price of his boat from our boys.

In the mean time, the French aircraft had wheeled about and were following the transport, serving as a sort of rear guard. The destroyers still circled and zigzagged about us. It sounded pleasant and warlike to hear the buzzing of the motors aloft. We yelled greetings to the airmen and they peered at us through their goggles waving in reply. One of our wise cracking soldiers asked an airman for a match and the flyer nodded his head. He received the horse laugh for this pretty stunt.

Yes, there it was, beautiful France in all its glory, and it certainly was beautiful. The hills around the harbor bathed in the morning sunlight, reminded one of our own Hudson River Palisades. The quaint little red tiled roofs which studded the hillsides reassured us that this was some strange land. Strange land, it was. France, the country which for over four long years had spent freely its youth and wealth in the cause of humanity. Still the gallant country fought on waiting in hope for the aid of America. And here we were—bang! I heard a voice aside of me cry, "Ah! what a dump, I'm going back home to Harlem."

We anchored that night inside the breakwater, most of us sore because we could not go ashore. However, the following morning we were landed

and assembled in marching formation with our full packs on. We found that we were two kilos from the city of Brest and eight kilos from Pontanézen Barracks where we were to be billeted in a "Rest Camp." We looked around for trains to carry us there but were politely informed that we were to walk, that is if we didn't mind, in order to look the country over and to get acquainted with the people. Of course, we didn't mind walking eight or ten kilometers with 112 pounds of junk on our humps, no, of course not.

I shall never forget that long memorial march. Two miles we hiked up a hill that would make a mule stagger, then we started on our cross country gallop. The full pack and my rifle gained weight every ten steps and I lost weight. When we reached the city, however, I forgot all about the pack.

The novelty of seeing American soldiers had not as yet worn off the inhabitants for they turned out to greet us with no little enthusiasm. I suppose this was only natural as we had travelled over three thousand miles to try to win their bloomin' quarrel for them. After this enthusiasm came the French kids who assailed us furiously for "Tobac, sou or souvenir." They didn't mind which one of the three they got but they had to have something. We fell for their gag and emptied our pockets of everything we had. Of course, they yelled "Vive L'Amerique," but this didn't mean a thing to us.

The city of Brest was a mudhole. That descrip-

tion suffices. But there was no one to blame as the women were forced to work on the docks or in the fields all day and they had little time for cleaning. I suppose we were too thick to reason this out and we told the Frenchies what a rotten hole they hung out in. They said "Oui, Monsieur, oui, oui." I guess they must have thought we were talking about the weather. Some of the western boys thought it queer that the French could not speak English and were quite irritated when they asked for "water" and received a "No compré." Sewell, the boy with the bed-room eyes, persisted in telling them that the worst yard in Harlem beat their country to a standstill and they would repeat, "Oui, oui." Probably thought Sewell was telling them the latest war news.

After marching through and out of the city, we were given a ten-minute rest period. It seemed like ten seconds and we were on our way once more. Again, I was reminded of my pack which started to cut my shoulders, but no one seemed to have any time to carry it for me. About eight o'clock that evening, we arrived at a hedged in field about a mile south of Pontanézen Barracks, where we were ordered to unsling packs and prepare to retire. Some poor yap wailed,

"Where do I sleep?" which brought the top-kicker, an old regular army man around to our squad.

"Break out those wigwams on your humps, you

idiots," he bawled, "what are you carrying them for to keep the sun off your domes?"

We pulled in our necks and started to pitch our shelter tents. About 1 A.M., Jack Alden, my bunkie, and I managed to get half our tent up with the aid of the captain, some shoelaces and three bayonets, the bayonets making wonderful tent-pigs. Three A.M. the tent collapsed and we rolled up in our blankets and plenty of disgust. The bugle and rain served as an alarm clock.

The first morning in France brought forth many new novelties,—corned Willie, hard tack and hard work. Ten hours work was like a half day to us and we never gave Sundays the slightest rumble. Those eight days at rest were really miserable for us. Little to eat and gangs of hard labor. I best not go into detail in reference to the day under one Sergeant Arthur T. Grayson, Nashville, Tenn., of the miserable digging of a reservoir, of how we worked eighteen hours in the sun digging, a sandwich of corned Willie our only support. That slave-driving Southerner had better stay down South after the war or some Harlem youngster who worked under him that memorable day, will shorten his happy life for him. I really believe Grayson was responsible for my bunkie's physical collapse. Alden was taken to Base Hospital No. 4 the next night, suffering from some disease or other which he claimed he had contracted from over exertion at the reservoir the day before.

On Decoration Day, we received orders to pack

up and about noon the same day, we were on our way to the Railhead to entrain for parts unknown. Upon arriving at the railroad station I looked around for the passenger coaches but could see only cattle cars. We climbed into these. On the side of each car was a sign reading "Chevaux 8 Hommes 40." When we got inside the cars, we thought perhaps the sign painter had reversed the order of things. The car our platoon was assigned to was not much larger than a telephone booth. We were packed in so tightly that we barely had standing room, and had to shove and squirm about before we could create enough space to sit down. Nevertheless, we were in high spirits and glad to be on our way again. We gambled for the positions at the side doors, and I was lucky enough to win a seat in the open several times. Our chow on the trip consisted of corn beef, tomatoes and hardtack, and at some of the stations on the route, we received handouts of steaming hot coffee from the Red Cross, God bless them!

We passed through a pretty rolling country, dotted with towns and villages. We saw very few young men, for most of them were at the front doing their bit, and the work on the farms was being done by old men, women and children. The inhabitants gathered at every station to see us pass through hoping that we might throw off a tin or two of meat or hardtack. We learned quite a little soldiering on that trip. I was an advanced scholar in the art of opening cans of beans with my teeth and I could go to sleep within ten min-

utes with four men lying on top of me. That's soldiering, what I mean.

After three days of this De Luxe travelling, we arrived at a small town, St. Leonard, in Haute Vienne, our destination, which was about twenty kilometers from Limoges, the leading chinaware centre of France, and about sixty-eight kilos from No Place. Our platoon was billeted in "Hotel Bol Dor" and it was here we celebrated our first wash and shave in France. Surprising how a little shave will liven a man and make him feel fit.

The next morning Farrell and I started out to explore the town. We sauntered through the crooked little cobble paved streets, meeting a wine shop every other door, the alternate doors being those of the butcher, baker, cobbler and so forth. The French tradesman is the backbone of the Republic. His store is always one large room on the street, in the rear of which, and above, the family and cattle reside. At night queer looking iron shutters are drawn down over the whole establishment and so closed up, the town sleeps save for the prowling M. P. or the Provost Marshal. But as all the little crooked streets in these small French towns eventually lead to the Hotel de Ville, or the town hall, we presently came out into the picturesque and unevenly layed out square, or rather triangle, in which it stands, a spot suggestive of historical romance in all its nooks and corners with its houses jutting out irregularly here and there beyond their sisters and making

the street and sidewalk, if there is any sidewalk, crooked.

Farrell, my Sein Fein bunkie, and myself wound up in a cafe on the main road about seven o'clock that evening. The place was jammed with American soldiers, most of them intoxicated, the rest on their way. Here we had French fried potatoes, eggs and red wine which is the favorite course for the American soldier. Seeing that we had finished our "chow," the chic-looking barmaid came over to our table giving us a small cardboard with "Cien France" stamped on it, our bill. Farrell stood up and with a bored expression on his face, produced a roll of United Cigar coupons.

"Ah, much moné, Americaine," said the barmaid, her eyes glistening at the sight of the coupons.

"Ah, oui," spoke Farrell nonchalantly peeling off a coupon and handing it to the girl. She thanked us profusely as we left the wineshop quite elated over our successful bargaining. "All is fair in love and war," said Farrell.

Upon emerging from this place about half-past eight, we were surprised to find that this little town of some five hundred souls had retired. It was not dark—it was black! No street lamps had been lighted for three years lest Hun Gothas might spot them. As there was no moon and only here and there a faint light glimmering through a shuttered window, it was no easy task to find our way home; but we finally arrived, with no greater

mishap than running into a dog which a woman had on a leash, causing the mut to yelp with surprise.

Next morning we had no mess but we were getting used to missing meals. Towards evening, I bought two lamb chops which set me back about five francs and had the madame in the hotel cook them for me. The chops with frog bread and beer certainly did taste fine.

The villagers used us very generously as we were the first American troops they had seen until some of the boys learned to speak French fairly well and put them wise to the pay we were getting. They then thought every American soldier was a millionaire and started to overcharge us in the matter of prices. I heard a story which illustrates the price-gouging of Americans pretty well.

A French soldier went into a shop in the village and asked the price of a souvenir handkerchief.

"Five francs," answered the shopkeeper.

"Too high," grunted the Frenchman and walked out. A Canadian soldier went in to price the same handkerchief; he was told he could have it for twenty-five francs. He left without buying. An American soldier was the next to call.

"How much?" asked the Yank, picking up the handkerchief.

"Fifty francs," replied the shopkeeper without the flicker of an eyelid.

"Give me five of them," said the Yankee, reaching for his wallet.

St. Leonard was by no means a "leave centre."

It was drill, drill, drill all day long in the blinding hot sun of June—the same old squads right and left which we had had for months steadily while at Fort Schuyler in America. We took a fine hike one sunny day, sixteen kilometers with heavy marching order. Major Wilbert was trying to harden us,—he succeeded but he knocked many a husky lad bowlegged trying. I was sick of this drilling and hiking and one Sunday morning I hopped an eastbound freight for Limoges. I had intentions of looking up Irving May who was attached to the 59th C. A. C., then quartered in the Cavalry Barracks at Limoges. After much difficulty, I found Irving at the bicycle races just outside the city and we had a great chat. Certainly felt fine to meet him so many miles from Brooklyn.

Getting back to St. Leonard was not as easy a matter as I had figured it to be. I couldn't seem to find what railroad passed through my town and none of the frogs were able to understand me. I was afraid to take a freight train going West, what if it didn't stop at St. Leonard; I would be classed as a deserter if I landed at a seaport town. I was certainly perplexed; nothing to eat and not a franc in my jeans. About seven o'clock that evening I was arrested by an M. P. and hustled up to the Provost Marshal, charged with "suspicious loitering." I explained my case to the Provo and he advised me there were no more trains for St. Leonard that day and I would have to hire a room in a hotel until the following morning. Me, hire a room in a hotel without a

franc to my rank? I said, "Yes, sir," and left his office, thinking I was very much out of luck, but as I reached the sidewalk, I chanced to see Malloy, one of our regimental supply men driving an F. W. D. full of supplies bound for St. Leonard. I hopped aboard and before many hours passed was comfortably running up a bill in Marie's Cafe, next to Hotel Bol 'Dor, telling my buddies about my experience. Six of us planned to go to Limoges the following Sunday to beat up the Provost Marshall.

The following day we were issued "tin derbies" and gas masks. This didn't mean a thing to us as far as going to the front was concerned, as we were due to stay at St. Leonard until we drew our Howitzers from the Ordnance Base at Is-sur-tile. Men were being sent to Limoges to attend the various artillery schools and I was selected to go to Paris with one hundred and twenty other men to attend a French Tractor school. Why I was picked I never found out as I couldn't distinguish a Ford from a Mack at that time.

We were a jubilant bunch of soldiers that piled into a "Frog passenger train" bound for Gay Paree. Corporal Small and six "bucks," including myself, were assigned to a second class compartment and we had gangs of eats and francs with us, I'll wail to the world. We managed to sleep on top of one another the first night on the road, but the second night, I was elected to sleep in the package rack, a wire frame near the ceiling about twelve inches wide. It was tough going,

but I made it without any cuts or bruises. The third day on the road was wonderful. The sun was bright and the day warm. The flat country, extending as far as the eye could see, was all cultivated; herds of cows were grazing lazily and peasant women with handkerchiefs tied round their heads were working in gardens or pitching hay. Here and there was a windmill. We crossed a long bridge; and the railroad tracks became more numerous; suburban trains appeared taking their cargo to the metropolis; lines of empty cars with queer top-compartments on sidings were being swept and cleaned and even the brass of the engines polished by women and girls. We rounded a curve and looking out of the window, I saw with a thrill the famous Eiffel Tower. I could hardly believe my senses—Paris!

CHAPTER IV

Instead of being met at the Gare du Nord by a liveried porter with a gold hat cord from the Ritz or Meurice and being packed into an omnibus with the baggage stacked out of the way on top, we were met by two French officers with worn uniforms and were packed into five large motor trucks with our baggage under foot. Through the Boulevard de Magenta and the Place de la République we were driven, people stopping in the streets to greet us and waving their hands to us from their seats at sidewalk tables in front of cafes. The column at the Bastille loomed just in front of us, but we turned into a side street and we were lost from the crowds. We finally arrived at the tractor school which was situated in the Bois du Bologne, carefully concealed from aerial observation by great drooping trees and camouflaged canvas screens.

It was a case of love at first sight when we saw the barracks. They were wonderful, and that is putting it mildly. We were too tired to prowl around the city as it was quite late before we were completely settled, but MacPherson, the best Scotchman I have ever met, and I planned for a grand excursion for the following day. Hardly were we sound asleep, however, when we were aroused about midnight by a whir of aeroplane motors, which meant nothing more exciting than

the French patrols being up on guard for a possible Hun air raid. Disappointed, we turned over and things again became quiet, except for Pete, the Pollock's, snoring.

Morning came and with it the first mail from home; as many as seven blessed letters for me, including one from the "Vamp." No wonder that when later in the day the other fellows went in groups of two, three and four to enjoy the freedom of the city till ten o'clock, I preferred to wander off alone.

Paris was still gay, but its glamour was somewhat dimmed. It is not the soul-suffocating Paris that it was before the war, for now every able man is a soldier, and the women are overflowing with a spirit of patriotism that makes them ready and eager to give him retreat from his month of horror in the trenches.

If an American is not at work, not at the theatre, not at a cafe, and not sightseeing, you may be sure to find him at the "Y," which was a private house on the Avenue Montaigne, taken over by the Y. M. C. A. for the duration of the war, a large stone mansion with a delightful courtyard where, in the afternoons and evenings, young girls would serve sandwiches, cake, coffee, tea, lemonade, chocolate and real ice cream. All fine! It is not for me to criticise in these pages, but why weren't they devoting more of their resources to the boys at the front who were yearning for cigarettes and chocolate? Was it necessary for the Y. M. C. A. to have such wonderful

places of recreation in this great city where recreation could be had by merely walking along the wonderful boulevards? In my eyes the "Y" was making a gorgeous grandstand play before the General Headquarters, then situated in Paris, and the men in and around Paris were reaping the benefits. Why wasn't this zealous organization up at the front helping out the Salvation Army? However, when an unprepared nation goes to war, there is bound to crop out some serious errors which can not be avoided where there are so many hands involved.

The tractor school, where we were supposed to be learning, was a huge French joke. After learning the principal parts of the tractor and its functions, we were taken out on the road in convoy. Eight or ten men would be assigned to a tractor, each man getting a chance to drive a mile or two. If we had plenty of cigarettes, the French instructor would give us a good mark; if we didn't, we'd be out of luck. As there were no automobile or tractor instructions after three P. M. or on Saturdays or Sundays, we were permitted to do what we pleased, and the natural thing to do was to go sightseeing, even though on every corner we Americans had to run the gauntlet of vendors of post cards and souvenirs. MacPherson, the thrifty Scotchman, invested his capital in Bull Durham tobacco. He purchased one hundred bags at five cents a bag and peddled them on the metro stations and in the Bois for one franc a bag. As a franc was worth twenty cents in American coin

at that time, MacPherson was making fifteen cents on every bag he sold. Not such a bad business, and the frogs were just wild for Bull Durham. We longed for a pushcart so we could carry on a more extensive business along the Boulevards.

We went to the Trocadero and the Eiffel Tower, where a poor old man, Monsieur Appay, who since the erection of the tower, had served as official guide, but was put out of business as the government had closed the shaft to visitors and established a wireless station at the top. It was entirely shut within the gates, two soldiers pacing around it with bayoneted guns. But even though we could not get into the Tower, there was still the "Grand Roue," nearly as high, which, it being Sunday, would be in motion at 2 P. M. We took our seats in the mammouth wheel, each revolution of which in the air constitutes a trip, and from the top had a wonderful panorama of the city, with the Seine girding it like a silver ribbon.

From here we went to Napoleon's tomb, and another step or two brought us to the Invalides, the courtyard of which is now given over to the display of captured German trophies—guns, shells, aeroplanes, parts of zeppelins, pieces of clothing, altogether making a veritable museum. The popularity of this place on a Sunday afternoon equals that of an automobile show in New York on a closing Saturday night.

Somehow or other art didn't appeal to the eyes of MacPherson who was a dyed in the wool Har-

lemite. He wanted to eat and drink and have a good time, and he did.

We shared our bunks and eats with a few hundred Doughboys and Marines who came in from the trenches in order to parade in Paris the following day, July 4th. They were battle scarred and lousy. Men who had participated in all the earlier battles from Cantigny to Chauteau-Thierry. We sat on our bunks till after twelve midnight, which is a pretty late hour in the army, listening in awe to the tales of battle and death, and the terrific blows which the 5th and 6th Marines had dealt the enemy.

On July 4th all Paris greeted the boys from the trenches and the city went enthusiastically mad over the parade. That evening MacPherson and I attended a show at the Gaumont Theatre which is located in the Latin Quarter, held for the benefit of the wounded Allied soldiers. Before entering the theatre, we strolled around the vicinity. It was surely the "Boul Mich," for there were drawings in charcoal and crayon on the battered walls, the caricatures and bars of music, the bold nudes and bits of satyric verse and flowing signatures; but there was no life. The Apache district disappointed us, and we went back to the theatre, arriving in time to secure good seats.

The show itself was a grand success. Elsie Janis and several other leading American and French celebrities performed. Georges Carpentier, soldier and boxer, staged a four-round exhibition with an American soldier, and Irene

King, if I remember the name correctly, famous American vocalist, led a Marine quartet in the "Star Spangled Banner" and the "Marseilles." The audience, composed of the very highest Parisian society folk, applauded wildly at everything that smacked of American.

That night Mac and I got lost in the complicated metro system, and we stood reveille on Madeleine Station some twenty kilometers from our camp. With the "help of God and a few Marines," we finally found our barracks, arriving there ten hours late.

The following Sunday Mac and I went to look over the much talked of Plaza la Concorde. It was mighty wonderful, and we spent several hours looking at different curiosities and trying to light-finger some souvenirs, but had no luck, as everything was riveted to the walls or caged in. Outside were several hundred captured German guns of all size and caliber. There were several Boche aeroplanes, having been captured without much damage, the huge Iron Cross easily discernible on the sides. I thought it was all very wonderful, but my bunkie said it was "rotten"—he knew.

CHAPTER V

On the evening of July 8th, MacPherson and myself were at the Y. M. C. A. on Avenue Montaigne writing letters, when, about half past ten, a "Y" secretary entered the writing room and requested every one to stop what they were doing and go into the bomb-proof (bomb-proof if a bomb didn't hit it) lobby in the interior of the building, as an order had been received from the police department to extinguish all lights. No sooner had the request been delivered when we were in darkness, but luckily one of the boys had a pocket flashlight, and with the aid of it, three or four candles were soon lighted. Several waitresses from the "Buffet" came running in with blanched faces murmuring "*Sales Boches.*" The fire-engines and ladder companies raced madly through the streets blowing their sirens. By the time we reached the door to see what was happening, the French air patrols were up, dropping their green and red signal lights; for after warning of a raid is given by telephone from the front lines, it requires from twenty minutes to half an hour for the squadron of fifteen or more Taubes to reach the city. About eleven o'clock the anti-aircraft guns mounted on the Arch of Triumph began to speak.

In these raids, the enemy's planes came over the lines in flocks and, penetrating the outer defenses, were met by the barrage of the Paris guns.

They fly high, shutting off their motors to avoid making any noise, let their bombs drop anywhere and dash for home. From our camp in Bologne we could see men at work on the banks of the Seine, trying out a new smoke screen for use on moonlight nights; also a system of wire entanglements lifted into the air by balloons was in process of being perfected.

Up to this time, we had not received our pay from the lieutenant in charge, and as our sightseeing expeditions to Paris cost us *"beaucoupe francs"* we decided to sell our personal belongings to the French people in order to secure funds. After our personal belongings were fond memories, we sold our army equipment, such as shoes, raincoats, barrack shoes and sweaters. My buddy, MacPherson, sold his raincoat to a Frenchman for seventy francs, which price was rather exhorbitant, as the coat leaked like a sieve. The frog, realizing he had been swindled, brought a gendarme into our barracks to try and get his money back. After a heated argument, MacPherson, who was quite a pugilist, beat the two Frenchmen up, chasing them helter-skelter out of the barracks. That was the last we heard of them. Mac suffered a broken hand as the result of the encounter and he was sent to St. Anne's Hospital the following day. I bid my buddy farewell with no little reluctance, as he was one of the cleanest cut boys I met while in the service.

Good things do not last very long, and on July 12th, much to our sorrow, we received orders to

roll our packs and prepare to leave that evening. Morton, Delaney and I made a hasty trip to the Plaza de Concorde to get our last glimpse of Paris. We certainly got more than our share, arriving back at the camp just ten minutes before the trucks left, the three of us quite glassy-eyed. I'll never forget that wild ride through the heart of Paris on our way to the station. There was much yelling and cheering and, as we passed the Opera, some of the more daring fired their regulation revolvers into the air. The people thinking we were coming from the front, cheered us along the boulevards as though we had saved their city from the Hun.

The trip to Limoges was one of the happiest, gayest, wildest trips I ever made while in France. There were but four of us in a second class compartment, and we had enough rations for six and enough wine for sixty. After Delaney was pretty well "oiled up," he amused himself by shooting at cows from the window of the car with his rifle. Fortunately he was so drunk his shots went wild. We arrived at Limoges entirely too soon. The detachment made a wonderful exhibition, marching or rather staggering through the streets towards the Caserne, the lieutenant in command feeling as good as the best of us.

That evening we were paid off, this being the first pay we had received since we left Schuyler. I drew an enormous sum of 650 francs, and with Morton and Delaney hired an open barouche and started off to "do" the city. Of that wild cruise,

I faintly recollect pushing the hack up a steep hill, the horse being unable to go any further. I forget where we wound up. Delaney persisted in telling every M. P. we met that he was General Pershing. Some of the M. P.'s had the audacity to doubt his word. The next morning I found in my possession twelve francs and a Japanese umbrella.

That afternoon we were marched over to the Automobile Field, some three kilometers from the Caserne, where we were to be examined by American automobile instructors on driving. I was assigned to a three-ton Packard and managed to get a fair mark.

We were in Limoges but three days when we received orders to rejoin our regiment, which was still quartered at St. Leonard. The 59th C. A. C. had left their town of Revenay for La Courtine, the great artillery range for heavy gun practice. We were pleasantly surprised when we arrived at St. Leonard. The regiment had succeeded in drawing from the Artillery Base at Is-sur-tile both guns and tractors and we were all prepared to go to the front. At least the men thought so.

St. Leonard was still the dreamy quaint old town we had left it. As our regiment had no ammunition trucks at that time, the would-be chauffeurs, myself included, were detailed to act as reserve gun crews until our trucks were available. This meant digging gun pits and bomb proofs with gas masks on in the hot sun of July, which was anything but pleasant, but the evenings were cool and refreshing and Jean Palteni and I passed

many a franc across the tables in Marias, our favorite cafe. Our squad would retire to the cafe about 8:30 and talk over our insurance and shrouds over glasses of Vermouth cer Zese. Another subject which brought no little discussion was whether or not it was proper for American soldiers to sweep the streets of a French town which had not been dirtied by them. I dare not put forth details on this subject as it is entirely too lengthy.

One bad accident marred our stay at St. Leonard and that was the unavoidable killing of a French gendarme by one of our men. It seems that a half dozen German prisoners had escaped from the prison camp at Limoges and a posse of ten gendarmes were sent out to scour the surrounding woods for them. One of the gendarmes, Paul Genot, ran across our picket who was guarding the guns then emplaced in the woods near the town. The picket, seeing a figure crawling in the dark underbrush, challenged the unknown party to halt and receiving no reply, he fired with his revolver, killing the gendarme instantly. We were deeply grieved over the incident and the boys of the regiment contributed over twenty-five hundred francs for the Frenchie's widow.

Whether in St. Leonard, Paris, or at the front, the greatest joy in the soldier's life is the arrival of the mail with letters from home; next to letters, magazines and newspapers are hailed with delight and although a month or more old, are read with an eagerness that would amply reward

those who were thoughtful enough to send them. A soldier would rather miss a meal than to have the mail distributed and receive none.

We received the much waited for orders to leave St. Leonard on August 14th. That afternoon we were busily engaged in loading our eight-inch Howitzers on flat cars. The following morning we marched down the winding roadway towards the station, bidding our French friends "Adieu." From the warmhearted French, who are so glad when you come and so sad when you go, the American soldier does not turn away without reluctance.

After a short sticky trip of six hours, we arrived at our destination, La Courtine. We were assigned to barracks which had been used by Napoleon's soldiers and as all Napoleon barracks are built in the same manner, this one was no exception. There were three long, four-story buildings of cement on three sides of a square, the inside of the square being used as a drill ground, and on the fourth side which ran along the street, was a stone wall ten or twelve feet high, in the centre of which was an iron gateway. In the rear of the large middle building were the mess halls and other buildings necessary to camp housekeeping.

We carried our packs and bags up three flights of stairs and entered a long room lined on each side with cots. This was to be our home. It was lunch time, however, and down we went again promptly but with some misgiving, to a mess con-

sisting principally of hot soup poured into a deep plate so thickly covered with grease that you could easily write your serial number on it, black bread, potatoes and cold coffee. However, in the course of an afternoon's ramble, we located a canteen where we were able to get sweet chocolate on sale, with wines and two or three kinds of nuts. After another heartrending meal at six o'clock, we sought comfort at the Y. M. C. A. where they had movies.

The next day I was placed in the automobile section but this didn't mean a thing as the Battery had about three trucks for forty chauffeurs. The men who had no cars were picked to dig emplacements up on the range for our guns. We dug, every man jack of us, eighteen hours at a stretch.

On firing, our regiment surpassed all target records on the range, making sixteen direct hits in succession.

One evening at a Y. M. C. A. entertainment, the New York boys became excited when they saw scenes of New York being flashed on the movie curtain and they started to sing and shout, all in good heart. The Y. M. C. A. secretary, a clergyman from "Oklahomy" threatened to put us out if we didn't subside as we were annoying the officers "parked" in the front rows. Immediately the boys started in hopping all over the officers and the Y. M. C. A. Some wise cracker asked the officers what they would do when they hit the front and heard the noise. Eddie Sewell, the child with the bedroom eyes, sings out that he was put out

of better places than the "Y." This spoilt the cake and resulted in the lights being turned on and the men ordered to hit the air. We hit the air and outside we cheered for the Red Cross, K. of C. and the Salvation Army, then we gave the Y. M. C. A. the grand razz.

The following morning the "Y" posted a notice barring the members of the 58th C. A. C. from attending any entertainments given by the "Y" and it also prohibited the members of the 58th from buying anything in the canteen. From that day on, our outfit and the "Y" could never agree. We found recreation at a small French Theatre down near the railroad and we had no little fun razzing the acts, they were so rotten; worse than the "Royal" on the New York Bowery, and that's going some.

From La Courtine, we moved to a small town called Vouecourt situated two kilometers from the station of Vignory, some forty odd miles from the front. We were in Vouecourt but three days when the chauffeurs were ordered to prepare for a long railroad journey to St. Naizare, a seaport town, in order to "draw" our ammunition trucks. After passing a cold dreary night at Chaumont, General Pershing's field headquarters, we entrained for Paris where we were to change trains for St. Naizare. I was elated over the prospects of getting another glimpse of dear old Paris.

The glimpse I got was hardly worth writing home about. We arrived in the railroad yards outside the metropolis about two o'clock in the

morning. At three, we were riding swiftly over the French rails in the direction of the coast. We had to beg, borrow and steal rations on that trip as we ran short the very first night on the road.

In due time we arrived at Concentration Camp No. 1, about three kilos from St. Naizare and found the place second to Brest for mud, filth, and disease. We fought two hours trying to get a cup of hot coffee to kid our stomachs on as we had had nothing hot to drink or eat for three long cold days. We were told that our trucks would be ready for us in ten days and we would have to work around the camp in the meantime to earn our board,—as it were.

CHAPTER VI

It was the first sunny day in months when the spic and span Colonel Day, commander of the post, was showing some rookies from the States, how to mount guard, and the whole affair seemed so ridiculous to the boys from the 58th who were looking on, that they burst out with melodious laughter intermingled with some funny remarks. The Colonel went up in the air and started to walk over to where we were standing. The only thing for us to do was to run for our barracks and we did, the Colonel following in hot pursuit shouting "Halt!" at the top of his lungs. Upon entering the barracks, we feigned "slumber" with our blankets over our heads. The Colonel strode in.

"Who was ridiculing me outside, get up out of those bunks, you idiots!" he bellowed. No answer. He then threatened to place the entire detail under arrest and Johnny Morton saved the day. He explained the whole affair and we received three days hard labor in consequence. We worked twenty minutes the following morning under some wise non-coms attached to the Camp Engineering Corps, then we ducked the details, Y. M. C. A., K. of C., city, etc.

Somehow or other, our trucks were being held up and we were advised that we would have to stay another week. We had plenty of

time to mope and we certainly took advantage of it.

One evening Fitzpatrick and I strolled down to the city to look it over. We were surprised to find it completely Americanized. The Army had built docks, steel warehouses and miles of railroad. Modern transportation had also made possible which in warfare means indispensable, the intentive employment of heavy artillery. We use siege guns to-day where yesterday we employed eighteen-pounders and seventy-fives. That involves the construction of complicated railroad systems—trucks, sidings, locomotives, ammunition cars—all over the country, operating forward and sideways behind the line. Two years ago, twelve months ago, the spot where we found ourselves was a sleepy third-rate seaport, whose very existence was known to few Americans save the captains of merchant ships and now, what a wonderful change the war had wrought. America had captured the city! They even controlled the fire and police departments having motor fire apparatus imported from the States, located in the more congested sections of the town. We were quite surprised at seeing a number of American telephone girls clad in the natty blue uniform of the Signal Corp. An M. P. informed us that they were "commissioned property" and enlisted men were forbidden to speak to them. After spending a quiet hour in the K. of C., we made our way back to camp hoping against hope that we would be made officers the following day.

The following day, however, brought a convoy of sixteen troop ships into port from America and all through the day and night, troops marched through our camp on their way to Troop Receiving Camp No. 2. The new comers were mostly draft men from the Southern States and we were surprised on hearing that the infantry regimental numbers ran as high as eight hundred and seven and the machine gun battalions as high as ten hundred and thirty-four.

We moped around for a few days more and were then loaded on trucks and carried down to the Automobile Park where we were to be assigned to trucks. Then for the long journey across the country from the coast to the front. The Park contained every sort of a gasoline-driven vehicle from a Ford to a gun tractor. Dodges, Cadillacs, Holt Tractors, Quads, Whites and all sorts of automobile makes were lined up for blocks, many of the chassis still without complete bodies. Everything was on the go, men running around "gassing" trucks and mechanics busily engaged putting the finishing touches on the bodies. Sergeant Sweat, who was in charge of our second battalion chauffeurs, appointed me "driver" of "Four Wheel Drive" truck number 49825 with Private Allen McLane as my assistant. We were ordered to draw tools and oil and prepare for immediate departure.

No doubt many of my readers have seen an F. W. D. some time or other during the war. The engine distributes power to the four wheels, in-

stead of the rear two as on ordinary cars, therefore, making it a very powerful truck and enabling it to handle all sorts of heavy loads without difficulty. Our trucks had the regulation "U. S. Army Ammunition Body" on, minus the shed, tarpaulin, skid chains and a few other incidentals which the officer in charge said we would not need.

McLane and I tried to crank the blame stone crusher for half an hour, getting nary a chug from it. Corporal "Babe" Jandecky, the six-foot pipefitter from Harlem, seeing our plight came over to our truck and spun the crank handle around a few times which started the motor. Mac and I hopped on our seats and we were all set.

The convoy which consisted of thirty-four F. W. D.'s under the charge of Lieutenant "Joe" Hagen, who had a motorcycle with side car attachment, started moving about noon in the direction of the docks. After a few hours waiting at the Repair Warehouse, our trucks were finally loaded with automobile parts to be delivered at Venielle on our way to the front. At three P. M. that day we started off at a mad dash. Sergeant Sweat, driving the first truck, was making twenty-five miles an hour and of course everybody else had to make twenty-five or stay behind. Twenty-five miles an hour with an F. W. D. is like going fifty miles an hour with a touring car.

That first afternoon on the road I shall never forget. We went tearing through towns, across bridges, through streets just wide enough to pass, never slowing down one bit. French gendarmes

wildly gesticulated to us to drive slowly but they didn't get a rumble. It seems the lieutenant in charge wanted to make the trip to Vouecourt in ten days even though he lost half the trucks trying. We agreed with him, of course. Eight o'clock that evening, we parked our trucks in line along a country road and prepared to retire. Some of the boys slept in the fields with their shelter half over them, but Mac and I decided to sleep under our truck. Even if we did get a bucketful of grease in our faces, we would at least be dry the following morning.

Five A.M. came pretty quick and after a hearty breakfast of a slice of bread with jam, we were off again. We lost a truck about ten o'clock that morning through the [illegible]ness Sergeant Richards attached to [illegible]. We were driving through Savenay and for some unknown reason, one of the trucks in the line stopped short thus necessitating the drivers in the rear to jam their brakes on as the trucks in convoy were about ten feet apart in line. Two rather snappy looking Army nurses were giving this bonheaded Sergant the double O and naturally, he was paying no little attention to them. Naturally again, he wasn't quite fast enough with his brakes and he rammed the truck in front of him, spreading his radiator all over the road. There was nothing to be done but to leave the wreck at a nearby repair station and we proceeded on, minus one truck. Nothing else occurred for the remainder of that day except a catered supper of corned Willie and

tomatoes. That night we parked along a country road about a kilometer from a farmhouse and Mac and I thinking about the barn in the rear of the house, walked back, entered, found a spot and curled up like two wet roaches, tired and hungry.

Sunny and warm the next day but not for me. I was elected to tow Kayer's truck as he had burnt out his bearings. Forty-three miles I towed that "baby" breaking the tow chain three times. Jamming and slamming truck against truck, we travelled up grades and around sharp curves. I finally managed to get rid of him by complaining to the road master that my engine was hitting on two cylinders. Kayer was promptly hitched up to Morton much to the latter's disgust.

At noon we had a slightly different meal,—the tomatoes before the corned Willie. Engine trouble like the corned Willie bothered us that afternoon. Every fifteen or twenty minutes the convoy would be held up on account of engine trouble. It was contagious, but Mac and I escaped luckily without any serious breaks. We stopped at H. B. Gibbon's house, the American diplomat and author, and his wife, a very charming woman, treated us to coffee and crackers. The coffee was the first hot drink we had had for over four days and it certainly did hit the right target. We slept under nature's own canopy that evening some fifteen kilos past the "Little Gray Home of the West," which was the name given Gibbon's house, and we took a terrific beating as it started to pour about two A.M. and we were too fatigued

from driving all day to get up and pitch our pup tents. I awakened the following morning about five and saw one of my shoes floating down the ditch quite out of reach, but I managed to secure both of them and rinsing them thoroughly, put them on having wonderful visions of "sure cure for rheumatism."

Corned Willie, jam and two whistles. We were off again. That day we took the beating of our young lives. It rained and rained, stopping ten minutes of twelve, but twelve fifteen it rained harder than ever. The sheds of our trucks must have been waylaid on their way to France; we had the sockets but they were little consolation. However our "1917 contract" raincoats tended to hold enough water for both purposes. My raincoat, if I remember correctly, took four days to dry after that muddy day.

The trip was becoming monotonous. Second drivers were not allowed to take the wheel, and as a result the first drivers had to sit at the wheel from fifteen to seventeen hours a day. My back started to fold up like a jackknife from constantly bending over the wheel. We passed through towns, cities and fields; then we would hit fields, cities and towns. Everything the same. The towns consisting of the inevitable church, vin-joint and at the most, four or five dwellings. The cities were a little larger and the fields much larger. At Angers we lost a truck through a headon collision which one of the boys made trying to run up the side of a building. Barracks,

a hot meal and movies at Tours, the famous American S. O. S. centre, gave us new life and also a chance to have a good night's sleep.

Gasoline, corned Willie and two whistles. We were off again. We did a hop, skip and jump over a range of mountains. The range did not tend to keep us warm like Mother's range and when we tried to crank our trucks after eating, we found that the water had frozen in the radiators. Beautiful sunny France, how I adore thee!

At last we hit Venielle where we dumped out "Repair Parts." Venielle was a product of what the American Army had accomplished in the line of automobiles. The camp covered several square miles on which were built a large number of repair shops and factories. It was wonderful to see how rapidly and how carefully trucks would be sent out of the repair houses ready for shipment to the front.

We slept that night in lousy, wet barracks and the next morning at six, started off minus two more trucks which were left at the repair shop to undergo some minor repairs. And so the trip went along. Beaune, Langres, the fortified city, and finally Chaumont, where the General Headquarters of the A. E. F. were located.

We arrived at Chaumont about eleven P.M. and Lieutenant Hagen decided to make a clear run right through to Sonecourt, some twenty-two kilometers away where Battery D was billeted, and we were soon rolling again towards "home" as we called Vouecourt in the black of night, no lights

allowed on our trucks and our first experience of driving at night. After much jamming and minor accidents, we pulled in at Sonecourt at daybreak with thirty trucks, just eleven days and twenty hours out of St. Naizare. We parked our cars along the roadway and with our packs on our back, hiked over to Vouecourt where we were accommodated with some wonderful straw mattresses in a dry billet.

The following morning having had a hot breakfast we were paid by the captain and given our mail. I received thirty-two letters in a bunch, many of them dating back to three or four months. I was overjoyed with the receipt of a photo from the "Vamp"—everyone was in good spirits and gambling for big stakes was the main event of the day, but the following days were occupied cleaning trucks and equipment and preparing for the order to go to the front. We were all on our toes at that time as it was rumored around that a great American drive was about to be launched and we were to participate in it. Barrack bags and all "extras" were salvaged, dress shoes being taken and bayonets issued in their stead. The guns were hauled out on the road and the trucks lined up in back of them. Each truck had a different function to perform. My truck was to be the emergency truck and it was loaded with beams, tow chains and all sorts of implements for digging trucks out of mud or towing them.

CHAPTER VII

We are all impatient now, like runners on the mark waiting for the pistol shot. The faint boom of distant guns can be heard at times and this makes us grumble. Why don't they let us go in? We are ready. We are as good as any outfit up on the line. We hear of great work by the Regulars of the First, Second and Third Divisions, by the Twenty-sixth, Yankees of New England, and by the Rainbows of the Forty-second; it is also reported that other American Divisions made no small impression on the enemy's lines, the Fourth, the Twenty-eighth, the Thirty-second and the Seventy-seventh. The Twenty-seventh and Thirtieth, we understand, are somewhere with the British opposite the Hindenburg line near Cambrai. Doubtless we shall hear something of them too in due course. Great days, great days! But what a fever of exasperation we are aroused to, not up there ourselves!

Bang! the orders came like a flash. The guns were hastily loaded on flatcars at Vignory, the nearest railhead and the whole community was feverish with excitement. Bandoliers of ammunition were issued and rifles given a last inspection. The second battalion truck train, consisting of thirty F. W. D. ammunition trucks and nine big three-ton Rikers, started out for the front, which was about forty miles away just twenty hours

after the batteries had left, via side-door pullmans. My truck was the last in the convoy being the emergency truck.

The first day "rolling" was very bad. We had numerous small accidents as the roads were wet and slippery, but we managed to keep all the trucks in line with the exception of Hartman's F. W. D., which contained gun parts. Hartman was coasting down a very dangerously steep hill and his front wheels were running in a rut. He tried to get out of the rut by pulling hard on the wheel but could not. His assistant, a big farmer from the West, leaned over intending to lend a helping hand and gave the wheel a jerk. The truck jumping out of the rut ran over the ditch and down a ten-foot embankment rolling over twice, throwing gun parts and rations in every direction. It was miraculous that Hartman or his buddy was not killed. We could not bother with the wreckage as we were ten hours late so left it to its fate.

We are passing through a great supply depot now. On its outskirts lie mushroom cities of huts and sheds. Here is a great cold storage depot with eight thousand tons of frozen beef in this single building. Here is a big station for assembling planes and over there a base hospital with over twenty-four hundred beds. Through the town itself there flows by night and by day a never failing stream of food and munitions and replacement troops. Needless to say, the town lies upon one of the main roads along which the Race to Berlin is being run.

Back along that road, alas! streams another current, a counter-current of wastage, material and human. Upon its surface is borne all the litter of the battlefield, rusty rifles, damaged equipment, blood-soaked uniforms. Here is a mighty depot which handles and repairs such wreckage. These buildings have all been constructed within the past few months. It would take you half a day to walk through them. In at one end of the establishment goes a squalid torrent of torn clothing, unmated shoes, leaky rubber trench boots, odds and ends of equipment. In due course, after a drastic series of laundering, sorting, patching mainly by the hands of a regiment of twittering French girls, each item of this melancholy jumble finds itself reincarnated in various storehouses in the form of properly assorted pairs of boots and shoes, neat second-hand uniforms and complete sets of equipment. Nothing is wasted or thrown away. Campaign hats damaged beyond repair are cut up into soles for hospital slippers. Uniforms too badly torn for decent renovation are patched, dyed grass-green and issued to German prisoners. And so an army economizes behind the lines while at the front "expense" is an afterthought.

It is dark now and we are rolling fairly well. Convoy intact, but majority of drivers somewhat nervous when driving as lights are strictly forbidden. We arrive at a town that used to be Bedard about noon and after eating and washing, start out on the last stretch to the lines. This is where the French fought it out in 1915 with their

superior enemy. Nearly every building for a distance of many kilometers has been reduced to powder and every inch of ground is shell-plowed. I had never seen such indescribable desolation, being nearly comparable with the devastated areas resulting from a huge city fire. I was surprised to see some of the civilian French still living in bomb-proofs near their homes. There had been a raid the previous day or week and the houses of the little village had been shelled by the Boche and partly destroyed; yet they were inhabited. That might have been a street once—that shell-pocked thoroughfare with its cobbles piled awry, its curbing bitten out as though the teeth of a stone crunching giant, with scarcely a single house that has not gaping holes in the walls and piles of bricks and other debris laying in pitiful heaps in front of it, mute tokens of the devastation wrought by the enemy airmen. But in the middle of the pathetic ruined apology for a street, the children were playing away again as merrrily as if nothing had happened, shouting to one another in a glee that no bombs seemed able to hush. This is symbolic of the spirit with which France is bearing her strugggle, her devastation—it is with the heart-free, care-free spirit of childhood. One may crush but not conquer a race whose children can find happiness amid such surroundings, can abandon themselves to play almost before the shells have stopped falling upon their playground.

At Lagny we were informed that our Batteries detrained and had started out on the twenty-mile

hike to the lines. Here the convoy was held up to await for that great camouflage, darkness. Going up towards the line, that tortured strip of territory some five miles wide which winds from the North Sea to the Alps and within which two solid walls of men have faced one another for nearly four years, is more exciting than a game of chess, especially if it is your first time "in." It is very dark except when a flare or flash of a star shell lights up the road and searches everything with a gruesome greenish-yellow. The entire convoy is nervous and drivers are blowing their whistles, over the slightest provocations, thus holding up the entire convoy. The boom of the heavy guns is getting clearer and flashes all along the line are becoming more and more distinct.

We are now passing an infantry outfit "coming out." Their indistinct forms can be seen at times as they trudge doggedly along in single file on our left. Some are shouting "Good luck" and "Keep them on the run," while others are asking questions about our insurance and jokingly telling us their casualties. We heed them not, as our minds are on the truck ahead of us and the three-foot ditch on our right. If we let the wheel get away from us for a minute, we are in the ditch and once stuck, everything is over.

After three hours of this nerve-racking driving, we pulled up in the town of Manonville where after parking our trucks, we threw ourselves down on the side of the road in utter exhaustion. The following morning we were up early and on the

job. We were to take our "cargo" to St. Jean woods where our battalion was billeted some three kilos from Manonville. After passing numerous dugouts and evacuated machine-gun nests, we came to the foot of the steep winding roadway that led to the top of Mont St. Jean, our destination. At first I doubted the truck's ability to climb the steep grade, but sure enough, my old reliable slowly crawled up in "first" speed.

We were welcomed with hot rice and coffee and several letters which the company clerk had been saving for us. While we were unloading our trucks the cry went up from the guards,"Aeroplane alert, Aeroplane alert!" Immediately, every man in the open put his hands into his pockets and looked down at the ground. We could hear the whir of the boche planes above but we were unable to look up as our white faces would be seen by the airmen. After unloading we hastily cranked our trucks and "hit it up" for Manonville.

The following morning I rode up to Mt. St. Jean on the rear of Power's (the battalion dispatch rider) motorcycle in order to get some mail. The ride was more thrilling than the "Giant Roller Coaster" at Coney Island, and we surely did make time. Powers tried to go in every shell hole in the road but he missed two. When I alighted from the "plane" I thanked the lad and told him I would much prefer to walk back, and walk back I did.

I can not recall what happened in that awful nightmare on the firing line and I had little time

to keep up my diary. I have but dim recollections of wet, slippery nights with the flash of guns as our headlights, and those quiet nights when the guns were silent, we would crawl along the muddy roads straining our eyes in the darkness and praying that an ambulance with its load of riddled bodies would not hit us. It was a strange and not altogether pleasant sensation to find one's self actually at the front, that long talked of place we had rigidly trained for months and months. We were "rolling" from morn to night, but who cared —not one of us would leave it for the cushiest job in France or even in the States.

Time flew. One day we would be working on the Ninety-second Division front near Pont-a-Mousson, another day on the Verdun front hauling ammunition for French and Canadians besides our American light field artillery. Then our own Regiment would cry for ammunition.

Five hours sleep, a hurried meal, oil, gas and out again. On nights when there was no moonlight and heavy mists enshrouded the mountains, it was a trying nerve strain to make the run from Vilcey to Battery D gun emplacements. The history of every truck would be chock full of stories of narrow escapes from running into wagons, mules or ambulances, or running over the edge of the road or against the side of a hill. These difficulties and trials, however, were not what would occupy the mind when the German shells began breaking near; they lost their interest entirely. One can get accustomed to the blind driving on

black nights, but never to the weird whirr of high-explosive shells or the scattering of shrapnel through the trees. Even on the floor of the Death Valley where the road is level, except for fresh shell holes, the thrills might not cease, for here it had been a common experience to miss by a few inches a heavy ponderous truck of supplies or a madly driven ambulance loaded with the dying. A miss is as good as a mile during war-time more so than in peace.

CHAPTER VIII.

We are in the thick of it now. It is the Meuse-Argonne offensive, that greatest of all American army achievements. We are making steady progress in the almost impenetrable and strongly held Argonne Forest, which was proclaimed by European powers to be untakeable. Our army was taking it. Fresh recruits from the States were hastily being thrown in exhausted divisions with little time for training, but they had the advantage of serving beside men who knew their business and who had almost become veterans overnight. Our constant pressure against the enemy brought day by day thousands of prisoners and our dogged offensive was wearing him down although he desperately threw in his best shock troops against us, thus weakening his line in front of our Allies and making their advance less difficult.

It is the Fall of the year. Rain is abundant, roads are not too numerous and these are packed from end to end with traffic so congested that it is sometimes impossible for a vehicle to find turning space within five miles. These roads, though well constructed and constantly reinforced by the engineers, are none too reliable. They were never built to carry such traffic as this and since the inevitable ditch on either side deprives them of lateral support, the effect of a constant stream of monstrously heavy vehicles upon the surface

of one of them is that of a rolling pin upon a strip of dough—it makes it wider. Not only wider, but thinner for the edges of the road are squeezed out into the ditch, and the whole fabric loses cohesion.

It is dusk and I am cautiously picking my way through the traffic with thirty eight-inch projectiles and twenty cans of powder loaded on my truck. This is quite a heavy load as one projectile weighs over two hundred pounds. Almost anywhere along the road, particularly near the sides, our wheels are apt to suddenly find a soft spot and sink up to the axle with consequent congestion and tumult. It is a double tide of traffic. Both streams are made up of similar constituents, with certain necessary contrasts. There are lines of Doughboys either "going in" or "coming out." There is no mistaking the latter. Their uniforms are ragged and muddy, their faces are caked and their eyes are red from lack of sleep. They are obviously "all in," but they hobble manfully along, with the comfortable satisfaction of men who have left behind them a glorious task well and truly performed. They exchange ironic greetings with the full-fed, boisterous bands of adventurers whom they encounter, trudging along in the opposite direction, to a fate unknown. Ambulances are chugging by us now. All traffic gives way to this service of mercy. Those going forward are empty and trim, those returning are travel-stained and crowded. It is rumored that the American Army has suffered over a hundred

thousand casualties during the past month. The fighting in the Argonne Forest has been terrific. Grandpre, on our left, has been taken and lost, half dozen times. Each ambulance coming back from the front carries a full complement of stretcher-cases, and usually besides the driver, sits a gaunt, miry statue with his arm in a sling or a blood-soaked rag about his head. Then there are truck trains of slippery Quads, F. W. D.'s and big Rikers, all loaded to their capacity. Those going up, contain ammunition, barbed wire, galvanized iron sheeting, engineering material or rations; those returning are heaped with salvage of every kind, furniture, the property of refugees, battle-field debris and wherever an available space presents itself, men, footsore men, stragglers or regular working parties. The latter are usually colored and with their tin derbies balanced rakishly on their kinky domes, smile upon the seething activity beneath them with the simple enjoyment of a child at its first circus. Then there are guns, and more guns. These are mainly French seventy-fives and hundred-fifty-fives with American gun crews. Those going up are workmanlike but inconspicuous. They are newly painted with the usual dark red, green and yellow splashes. The fishing-nets which will be spread above them when they get into action interwoven with grass, leaves and rags, are at present lashed along the gun barrels. The gunners sprawl anywhere but upon their hard little iron seats. The guns coming out, look different. All are plastered with

mud; some are on the casualty list and are being towed by fussy little gasoline tractors.

I am off the main road and out of the traffic jam now. I am half rolling, half skidding down the hillside on my way to the valley where Battery C's guns are emplaced. Arriving at the guns, willing hands hastily unload the much-needed ammunition and I am back again on the main highway amidst guns, limbers, trucks, carts, ambulances and caissons all moving in an endless, tumultuous profane stream. At cross roads, the military police struggle manfully with an impossible job. Automobiles everywhere, Cadillacs, Dodges and Fords, all trying to make openings and steal a jump from the rest of the universe. Above us, the sky of France, weeping for her lost children. Around us, the marshy shell-plowed fields and trenches of by-gone days. Beneath us, mud, mud, slimy treacherous mud. How many times would I have loved to drive my truck into a ditch and leave it to its fate in order that I be relieved from the automobile section and placed on a gun-crew with the batteries. But no, McLane, my buddy, would persist in telling me that we would make it, and we did make it arriving at Manonville, tired but happy and ready for another day.

CHAPTER IX

It is early November now and the cold air of northern Lorraine whistles through the broken windows of the chateau where the automobile section is billeted. We have just come in from a cold, misty night on the road and we are lounging on our bunks which are drawn up before the fire, trying to dry our clothing and warm our bodies. We are a motely crew of adventurers from our muddy rubber boots to our "guard" caps which are drawn over our ears. There is Vandermine, former chauffeur for the New York Fire Department, a very reckless driver, indeed; Tommy Brown, a seventeen-year-old Yonkers school boy who used to drive his father's car on bright sunny days in Central Park, and there's Fitzpatrick, O'Brien, MacPherson and all the rest of them. Lines of fatigue are beginning to show on their unshaven, haggard faces and their eyes are swollen from constant peering through black nights while on the road We are as lousy as can be but this does not phase us, it is sleep we want, but we can not sleep in the cold. The topic of conversation is the "Shimmy," that new fangled American dance which had been described in one of Hanon's letters from the States. Vandermine, eloquent and magnetic, is voicing his opinion on it. We are at the height of discussion when Frankie Powers, Second Bat-

talion dispatch bearer, enters the room, shivering and wet.

"They got us boys," he said, flopping down on one of the bunks by the fire. He then described his tale of woe.

The night before, a convoy of eleven trucks loaded with ammunition had been sent up to our new gun emplacements, which were within a kilometer of the German front line. A ninety-day "Plattsburger," fresh from the States, had charge of the unloading detail and for some purpose or other, he flashed his pocket-light, the carrying of which was strictly forbidden in General Orders. Boche observers, always on the alert, must have spotted the light in the woods as a box barrage was promptly laid around the convoy. Two of the trucks managed to get out of the trap of shrapnel but the other nine were strewn along Death Valley, their drivers in the hospital. Johnny Morton had his jaw blown off and his truck smashed to bits. Farrell, my Sein Fein bunkie, was severely gassed and taken to the hospital unconscious. Fortunately, none of the truck drivers were killed, most of the casualties being gassed and shrapnelled. Jerry scored a direct hit on Battery A's powder dump which lighted the entire surroundings for several minutes, thus giving the enemy the full lay of our positions. A shell went through the cook-shack killing the cook and wounding several K. P.'s. All night long our batteries retaliated but still the murderous fire of the German artillery con-

tinued. We turned in that night feeling pretty glum.

The following morning, four of our squad were detailed to go up to Death Valley and get some of the trucks that were not severely damaged. Lieutenant Claiton, who had charge of the Second Battalion truck train, was on the seat of my truck to superintend the job.

The same uneventful trip up to the front. The same shell-ploughed roads and use-to-be villages; Mamey, Martincourt, Flirey, Fey-en-Hey and Vilcey, all powdered ruins, a shell-torn graveyard here, perhaps a lone church tower there. It does not seem possible that life could ever have been there. It looks as if it had always been dead. What testimony to human habitation remains is but mute and buried wreckage.

Things seemed to be "quiet" save for the never ceasing cracks of the seventy-fives and the whizzes of the German shells passing unpleasantly over us. As we approached the scene of the previous night's wreckage, we could hear the bangs from our own toad-like Howitzers. After much tugging and pulling, we managed to get three trucks out of the muddy ditch on to the road. The rest were absolutely hopeless and we were just getting ready to get out of the Valley when we heard the whir of a Boche plane over head. We tried to seek cover but too late, he spotted us, and in short time, Jerry began dropping H. E. along the road where our trucks were. Shrapnel rained through the trees breaking branches and making more noise

than harm. Then over came a box barrage, one of Jerry's favorite mopping up processes. Mac and I huddled down beside our truck but this afforded little shelter. Someone shouted something about a dugout down the road a bit and we started running for it. Sergeant Sweat left the motor of Tarabin's truck running in his hurry to get to the dugout. He then ordered us back on our trucks. We obeyed orders but we got under ours instead of on it. As the high explosives burst into the air, showers of steel fragments slipped through the branches overhead and several times jagged pieces went through the side of the truck. I treasure the piece that dented my tin derby and to this day I have it in my possession. The whistling and moaning of shells could be followed for a considerable distance in either direction; the close ones whanged in with a whuush! That was followed immediately by a concussion that stunned eyes and mind. It was as if we were hanging beneath a railroad trestle across which express trains were rushing one after another, each crashing into a hill and blowing up just as it got overhead. Two doughboys came out of the woods bearing a wounded comrade, blood gushing from his mouth. Another doughboy came running from the woods seeming to shirk the fire overhead. Things didn't seem to be going so well. This mere boy was running away from the lines, a very serious military offense. He was what you would call a "coward." Reading this, if you are comfortably fixed in a

morris chair with all the ease of the world, you would think the fellow should be shot on the spot. The two of us huddled under the truck were scarcely in a position, however, to indulge in such vigorous sentiments. What did strike me, this boy may have been a replacement and perhaps it was his first time under fire, was the powerlessness of human beings; of bravery, fortitude, all the qualities associated with successful soldiering, in the face of such a deluge of steel as this. The "Old Guard," the "Light Brigade," any sort of aggregation of heroes you wish, would have lasted out there in the open about two minutes. Brave or not brave, civilized or savage, fighting to free humanity or enslave it, mere human beings were as much on the level as if they were facing an avalanche. If I had my wish, I would have monuments erected in all our great American cities; a tall shaft with a lone doughboy on top, rifle with fixed bayonet in hand; for in my conception, these are the boys who really brought the war to a successful conclusion for the Allies.

"Ah! there we are, there we are," shouted Mac, who was kneeling beside me—Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!—four times in succession. Battery D is replying like the steady roll of a base drum. Our friends, the 19th Light Field, are firing also, the sharp cracks of their "seventy-fives" breaking the rhythm of D's salvos. A motorcycle and rider are seen coming up the shell-torn road out of St. Maria's Farm. The rider is unable to control his machine on the slippery road and he runs it into

the ditch where he lets it lay. He is doing a marathon up the road towards us, beckoning to Lieutenant Claiton who is calmly smoking a cigarette while adjusting his field glasses. The messenger arrives at Claiton's side and after shouting something, he starts off on the run for St. Maria's Farm. The Lieutenant walks over to where Mac and I are crouching:

"Sorry boys, but we can't bother with those damaged trucks now. Jerry is coming over strong and our lines gave way in several places. Let's get out of here as quickly as possible. Snappy, boys!"

We needed little coaxing and in short time we were racing recklessly for Manonville and safety. It was the end of a perfect day.

Back again in the town, we parked our trucks and went down to the chateau which we called the "Louse House." Here we lounged around the fire "reading our shirts," an interesting game like solitaire, waiting for the next call to go out.

The nearest bath house was at Evacuation Hospital No. 12 some twenty kilos away. The gun-crews having a reserve, found chance to get away from the Batteries for a bath. The Automobile Section having no reserve-crew, could not possibly take a bath unless it rained. Then we would strip and stand in the courtyard for a pleasant cooling shower, in November, too.

November 9th came. There was talk of Germany quitting or some sort of armistice being declared. Very few of us paid any attention to this

rumor. Why should we? Peace, and a hundred guns roaring just a few miles away? Peace, and a long line of ambulances loaded with the wounded passing our chateau on the way to the rear? Only a false rumor to bring the morale higher.

We went out that night each driver carrying written orders which were as unreadable as a German code book. I was to follow the truck in front of me as long as I could but in the event that I lost my bearings I was to resort to the schedule of towns listed in the orders. Somehow or other, I managed to "hang on" to the truck in front of me and we moved along rapidly, considering the darkness. Finally, the truck in front of me stopped and I drew up in back of him, asking what the trouble was, and he shouted to me that he had followed an ambulance in the darkness thinking it was one of our trucks and we were thirty kilos from Washington Dumps, our destination. What a plight to be in, especially on a dark night without the moon, but after much jabbering with M. P.'s and Frogs, we arrived at the Dumps and found to our sorrow, about fifty trucks in line waiting for ammunition. Washington Ammunition Dump was the largest American dump on that front and they supplied ammunition to over twelve divisions. The Dump located in a woods, was cleverly camouflaged, the trees being tied together at their tops over the plank roadway which was painted green, thus preventing aerial observation. During our wait on line, a fourteen inch naval piece, manned by sailors, came through

the woods on the other side of the dumps and fired five times. A sentry on guard along the roadway, explained to us that the gun was mounted on a railway carriage and it fired four or five times every night, disappearing from the woods before dawn.

At five the next morning, we were loaded with six-inch shells consigned to the 136th Field Artillery, which was in position on the left of Vilcey near Battery D. We made the run back to Vilcey in about three hours, passing the 34th Infantry going up to the trenches near Flirey.

Upon arriving at Vilcey an enemy aviator circled over our convoy firing his machine gun at our lead truck. We then drove our trucks as close as possible against the walls of the battered houses of the town, seeking safety in the cellar of the church. As soon as the "Archies" drove the Boche up, we were out on our trucks and off again to our destination.

We finally arrived at the 136th emplacements which were situated on the side of a ravine close by to St. Maria's Farm. The 136th, being horse artillery, had no respectable roads leading down to their gun-pits and we explained to the lieutenant in charge that once down in the ravine, we would be unable to pull up the steep side of the hill. The lieutenant seemed to know more about the ability of an F. W. D. than we did so we obeyed orders and skidded down the hill. By the time I was unloaded, thick, black mud was covering my hub-caps. Dinty Moore was stuck about

ten feet in front of me and Joe Elias on my side, had his rear wheel buried in the mud. The lieutenant having his ammunition, was tending to his own batteries and preparing for fire. We were out of luck for fair, especially when Mac reminded me that "they were breaking pretty close."

The action is fierce now, and my head is dizzy. Bang! a piece of shrapnel ricocheted off the body of my truck smashing the gasoline feed pipe and side lamp to bits, the gas slowly trickling from the jagged end of the tank nozzle. I immediately plugged the opening with cotton waste and started to get my tools out for an almost impossible task.

It is night now, and the constant firing of the guns close by is somewhat annoying. Somewhat! I have succeeded in repairing the broken feed pipe with the aid of a rubber tube that was attached to the never-used Prest-o-lite headlight and also some bandage which I had in my First Aid Kit. The engine is running evenly now with little loss of gasoline by leakage but I am still stuck in the mud with little chance of getting out. Elias had managed to get out some how or other but Moore's truck was still stuck, poor Dinty asleep on the seat, his assistant beside him also peacefully slumbering. Mac was continually complaining of dead horses smelling too much.

Gas! Gas!—that weird cry that makes every soldier drop what he is doing to don his mask, echoed through the ravine. There was a lull in gun firing on our right as the crews stopped to adjust their gas-masks. Mac already had his

mask adjusted properly and had hopped ahead to rouse Moore and his helper. My mask was delightfully crushed beneath a drum of gas which I always carried as reserve. I managed to get it on in short order, however, but found I had to nauseate and not being able to raise my mask from my face, you can imagine the result. Lucky for us it was a rather windy night and the gas, which was Phosgene, "lifted" out of the ravine in about twenty minutes enabling us to take off our masks, much to our relief. As soon as I had my mask off, I went down to the shell-hole full of water fifty or more feet from our truck and washed my "soiled" mask.

On the way back to the truck, my arms started to burn like a house on fire. The pain was excrutiating and I rolled up my jacket sleeves waiting for a flare from a rocket to examine my arms. The flare came and, great guns, my arms were blistering and the skin peeling off—Mustard Gas—sure enough, that deadliest of all gasses. I started on the run for the nearest dressing station which was located in the cellar of one of the houses in Vilcey about a half mile away. Arriving there, I found a lone officer with three sergeants working almost entirely without anaesthetics, dressing and cleaning the wounded. The cellar presented a terrible scene. In a corner lying on some straw, were three horribly mangled doughboys. Three slightly wounded machine gunners sitting on a bench whispering to each other; the officer one foot in a puddle of blood, was probing

for a machine gun bullet lodged in the leg of a captain who was stretched out on a rickety table.

After receiving a hasty field dressing by one of the busy sergeants, I was ordered to sit on the bench where the three wounded men were and wait for an ambulance to take us back to a hospital. I tried to explain to the officer that it would be impossible for me to go to the rear as I had to return to my truck but he cut me short with a snappy "Sit down!"

The chug of a motor can now be heard as it slows up before the cellar entrance. The ambulance is here at last. The two sergeants leave their work and with the aid of the ambulance driver, carry the three badly wounded men outside to the waiting car. The three machine gunners and myself are ordered to clamber into the ambulance, the first man stumbling over the foot of one of the stretcher cases. A horrible groan pierces the air—profanity, apologies—and we are off for the hospital.

As we are going through Mamey, one of the men "Went West," a young lad, could not have been more than eighteen, covered with mud and blood-stained bandages; he died in that stinking ambulance. One man is smoking now causing much coughing, and a "phosgene case" starts nauseating.

The hospital at last, a city in itself, a few kilometers from Minorville. The stretcher cases are brought into the dimly lighted, close smelling room where the wounded are received and laid on

the floor. In the hopeless cases, there follows the last phase; the men are carried out and lie with others like themselves, apart from human interest till death claims them. Then a plain unpainted coffin, a Chaplain, a quick procession, a few curious eyes, the salute, and the end. These graves marked by small wooden crosses upon which their names and rank are stamped, lie unnoticed, the types of thousands, by the roadside or away among the fields. Everywhere in the war zone one passes these graves. A great belt of them runs from Switzerland to the sea across France and Belgium.

In the operating room everything is bustling with excitement. The big drive is on and the wounded are streaming in by the hundreds. Surgeons are pale and haggard from overwork but are standing up under the strain wonderfully. The wounded lay naked on their stretchers while attendants daub them with hot soapy sponges; blood running from their wounds through the stretchers to the floor, forming little puddles. Those of us who could stand were lined against the rear wall and some "ninety-day wonders" began redressing our wounds. The medical treatment was a credit to the army the "wonders" keeping pace with the grizzled surgeons of the "regulars." A young doctor dressed my wound, took my pedigree, tagged me, gave me pajamas and slippers and put me on the road to a ward, all within a few minutes.

Between groans from the suffering, the odor of

antiseptics and wounded men streaming in all night, there was little sleep for any of us that night. An old-timer from the First Division was lying on the cot alongside of me suffering from tear gas. His name was Willis Hart and he hailed from Peoria, Ill. He showed me three wounds and a Croix de Guerre he had been awarded for fighting at Cantigny. The Boche awarded the wounds; the French, the Croix de Guerre. Hart was a very interesting chap and I listened to his tales of battle until after midnight. He told me of his experiences while in other hospitals and he explained that if we were held for more than ten days, the medical authorities would consider us casual and when fully recovered we would undoubtedly be sent to an S. O. S. base for M. P. duty. Hart said he was going to leave the "morgue" that night and I decided to go with him. About five A.M,, I was suddenly awakened by Hart gently tugging my blankets.

"Sh! not a word, attendant is asleep, put on this uniform," he whispered as he shoved me a denim trousers and an O. D. shirt. After fumbling around for some time, I succeeded in getting the outfit on over my pajamas.

"Ready? Yes? Let's go." Out we went as quietly as a team of mules, bumping into a mess-cart on the way to the door. However, we managed to get outside the hospital and as far as the gate, but here to our great dismay, was a picket on duty with rifle and fixed bayonet. Not

a chance in the world of getting by this bird. Hart told me to wait a few minutes while he explored the other exists. He returned shortly and told me that we were as good as out, as a Packard from the 65th C. A. C. was unloading bread at the commissary and would be going out in short order. We made our way to the truck and waited for some time before it started rolling for the exit. As it passed us, Hart and I swung over the tailboard concealing ourselves from observation under some empty bread bags. We heard the gruff "Alright" of the sentry as the truck passed out on to the road. Then everything was gravy. Hart was sort of delighted over his success and he jubilantly proclaimed that he would be an officer some day. He had served over ten years in the Regular Army and had been reduced from sergeant to private more than four times.

It wasn't long before we found that we were on the road to Toul. This would never do as Toul was noted for its M. P. efficiency in gathering stragglers from the American Army. After taking everything into consideration, Hart finally decided to get out and hoof it back to the front to look up his outfit. I tried to persuade him to go on to Toul and give himself up as his leg was in bad shape from a shrapnel wound and he couldn't make more than a mile on the road hiking. He sat in a corner of the truck for some time meditating and I dared not disturb him. Suddenly he must have struck upon a brilliant idea for he

jumped up and with a gruff "So long," disappeared over the tailboard. Without a moment's hesitation I went over after him. Sweet Cookie! I found Hart lying in the centre of the road, his right leg bleeding like a slaughtered pig. He must have opened one of his wounds in the fall from the truck. I tied a piece of my pajama around his leg which abated the flow of blood somewhat. I then lit up a "makings" for him that I found in his denim trousers and half carried and half dragged him to the side of the road, the dummy grinning like a child that had made a foolish mistake. Here we waited for luck and fate. He could not possibly walk more than a few steps and it was out of the question for me to carry him for his weight seemed like that of a piano. After some waiting in the chill misty morning air we heard the sharp clack of horses' hoofs coming in our direction. M. P.'s was Hart's first cry and a look of horror spread his face for he had a very bad dislike for these sometimes ill-natured keepers of law and order.

"Can't be," I encouraged him. "Can't you hear wagon wheels—use your thick Peoria nut."

Out of the mist came a French combat wagon drawn by a starving team of horses, two frog soldiers munching black bread were on the seat, the inevitable bottle of Vin Rouge on either one's lap. I stepped out in front of the team, drawing them to a halt, the frogs on the seat calling upon their favorite Saints for protection. They must have thought me a German spy or a ghost. After

they quieted down a bit, I pointed to the figure of Hart lying in the ditch, and in my pure French explained that we wanted a lift to Manonville. They could hardly refuse us and in a short time, I had Hart lying comfortably on some straw in the rear of the wagon. While on the way to Manonville, the frogs were continuously telling me "L'Armistice est signee!" but heed them, I didn't.

CHAPTER X

I arrived in Manonville about 10:30 A.M., November the eleventh, and found the chauffeurs who were off duty perched up in the tower of the chatean awaiting the dawn of peace. My buddy Hart had staid on the frog wagon, thinking he could find his outfit somewhere up at the front. After explaining my night's venture to the Major in charge, he advised me to go to the dressing station at Martincourt to have my arms dressed. He told me MacLane, my helper, had brought my truck in from the front and he would have charge of it until my arms were in good shape again for driving. He remarked that I wouldn't have much more driving to do as the war was about "fini." I decided to go up in the tower with the rest of the boys and see for myself.

What a wonderful sight! All along the line every piece of artillery was firing, black smoke rising in the sunlight from behind the German lines. The uproar was deafening, even to us who were quite a distance from the front lines. At exactly eleven o'clock, there was a mighty salvo of American artillery. Every gun on the front spoke, from rifle to naval piece, then silence. We waited eagerly for another gun to fire, but no, there was a permanent silence. The world was at peace. It seemed remarkable, just a few minutes before, the whole surrounding country was

in the throes of a great war, but that mad series of deafening explosions had subdued and now everything was peaceful and serene. The curtain had fallen on it all and there was to be no encore. France—with the black shadow of forty years rolled away from her horizon! France—the much-enduring, the all-surviving, the indomitable with her beloved capitol saved from the invader and her lost provinces coming back to her!

Every soul in the chateau was happy that day with the exception of the Major, a born leader, a soldier from the old school.

"If only we could be permitted to fight on for another five months!" the Major explained to a half dozen of us who were loitering around the company office waiting for news from Headquarters. "If only this great beautiful machine of an American Army could be given a chance to climb to full speed! Then we would be fighting at our height with our own artillery and our own tanks, plenty of motor transport, and enough aeroplanes to control the air and direct our own artillery fire against the enemy. We would be using acquired experience instead of borrowed experience. We would have a wonderful General Staff with the best soldiers and business men of America leading our men. We would then send these wonderful great hearted fighting men of ours over the top adequately protected by a perfectly timed barrage. Casualties would be reduced seventy-five per cent. and future victories would be a real matter of rejoicing, especially for our folks at home.

And—we would show our friends over here what the American Army is really made up of by driving the Boche helter skelter across the Rhine, demolishing his armies and bringing a peace that would last forever, with the German Empire but a bad memory. And now look what has happened! Peace! Demobilization! Back to a garrison. What luck!"

After hearing this sermon we wondered whether he thought of those poor muddy, bloody doughboys up on the line who were just crying for Peace. Peace, of course, with Victory.

The armistice being signed, with yearning eyes we looked towards America for the first time in months wondering when we would be passing the "old girl with the lamp" in New York Bay. While awaiting orders to pull out from Manonville, Farrell, Tommy Broun and myself, the three convalescents billeted in the chateau, would stroll around the surrounding country looking it over. My arms had to be dressed every day and I rode down to Martincourt to a field service station in the Major's flivver every noon hour. Everything was going along fine when the orders came. Twelve trucks, including my own, were turned over to the Army of Occupation, and on November 23rd we started off in convoy with the remaining twenty for the railhead for entrainment, as we thought. Little did we know what was in store for us. I was riding on MacPherson's truck and things were going along pretty well, though the traffic was rather congested as

troops both American and French, were making a wild dash for home. The first night on the road we billeted in a small town called Bruley, about twenty kilos from Toul. A few minutes after arriving there, a serious accident occurred. Three French children were horribly mutilated from the explosion of a hand grenade which they had been playing with and the place was a scene of much mourning and crying.

We were glad to hit the road once more. I am a passenger on this convoy and I have a chance to "enjoy" the scenery as we roll along instead of muddy roads which I had to keep looking at constantly when I was driving. Rain, no shed, cold food and there is not enough space in the truck to sit down and so we are forced to stand all the day. Pagny-sur-Meuse. Here we wait for the lumbering guns to roll in with their crews on the way from the front also, and after three days they arrive and we are off again.

At Houdlincourt I recall seeing some of the crack French Cavalry troops. They were really wonderful and that's putting it mildly. Every man was about six foot, groomed and polished like peace-time soldiers. Their trumpeters were playing the "Marseilles," and they made a wonderful showing as they trotted through the town on their way from the front.

November 24th found us on our travels again. We passed "Theda Bara" and "Victory," two of the 51st's nine-inch pieces on their way to the railhead.

Thanksgiving eve is here—but Sweet Cookie, what an eve! Rain, rain, rain, and everyone is wet and tired with nothing hot to eat and no dry billets. Everything reminded us of home—so different. Grieving would not help us any so we laughed it off. It was a huge joke, the joke being on us. We finally managed to secure a nice lousy hay loft. It was certainly fine. Thirty-four of our goodly company climbed up to dizzy heights and sank, to sleep on the twenty-odd pieces of straw the loft contained. How did that word hayloft find its way into Houdlincourt. Between cooties, rats, the good old rain leaking through the ceiling like a shower bath and the gun crews arriving in town at three A.M., we had a wonderful evening.

The following morning something unusual happened. The sun came out. In the course of the afternoon a rumor circulated the town that cocoa could be had for the asking, some thirteen kilos away where there was a Salvation Army canteen. We passed up our breakfast, cold salmon and bread, and with our trusty hiking sticks, Farrell, Brounie and myself still on sick report, started off on the road for the canteen. We really did enjoy that hike as gangs of cocoa and cookies were constantly playing havoc with our too vivid imaginations. We arrived at the canteen about four-fifteen and the lassie in charge immediately started to heat some cocoa. We sure did appreciate this girl's trouble, and after we had cookies and cocoa galore, we offered her some francs in payment but

she flatly refused. Salvation Army principals, fine stuff. The three of us sat at a table with the young girl who was from New York and hemmed and hawed for over three hours. Brounie gave me the wink which announced "time for pictures." Out they came, each one producing a picture of his best girl with a meek, "My girl." The lassie took great interest in everything we showed her and this pleased us greatly. After we had more than our share of cocoa, candy and crackers, we thanked the girl profusely for her trouble and went our way, thanking the Lord that there were people in France who did not have the everlasting "extended palm."

Houdlincourt again. Dirty, lousy, muddy Houdlincourt. Worse than the Bronx—but how could anything be worse than the Bronx. We were pleasantly surprised to learn that we were to move on the following morning. Move we did, four hours before sunrise, and some bitter cold. That trip was bad. Fires were built at every stop of the convoy and men would crowd around them endeavoring to get warm, but with little reward. We rode for twelve hours and arrived at a small town called Brachay, located about twenty-five kilos from Vignory the railhead where the guns were to be loaded for shipment to the coast. The billet assigned to us was wonderful, and after a flapjack and some coffee, turned in for much needed slumber.

Hanley, Walman, Brody, I dare say not one of them will ever forget that cozy billet in Brachay.

Here in the evening before blazing logs, a group of four or five of us would gather after a visit to the shops in town and have a feast. One of us would buy bread, another jam, another beer and perhaps a little cognac. At times one of us would surprise the rest with a box of goodies from home for we were all socialists then and whatever a man had he shared it with his buddies. We would chat and eat and smoke, and before the evening was over would probably sing to the accompaniment of a harmonica or a comb with some tissue paper on it. It was difficult to obtain fire wood, for in France wood is not nearly so plentiful as in America. A shining two-franc piece, however, would always persuade some peasant near by to put on his wooden "Leviathans," take a lantern in his hand, and go out into the yard where he would chop us enough to last a week, and, furthermore, would insist upon carrying it to our billet.

With the exception of an easy water detail now and then, there was little work to be done about the town. How comfortable it was to have nice, clean, dry billets. The rumors were the only bad feature about the place. Bill Hanley won the glass bicycle for having the best rumor in town or rather the worst as it turned out later to be. He claimed, by positive inside information, that our regiment was booked to sail from Bordeaux December 24th, 1918, on the S.S. "Leviathan," and we were scheduled to parade in New York on January 4th and in Washington on January 9th.

Then some one else said we were to march in Paris on Christmas Day as an honor guard for General Pershing. All these rumors proved false and only served to lower the morale of the Regiment.

General Davis, a brilliant artillery officer, had command of our brigade and he ordered a review one fine morning which was to take place twenty kilos or so from Brachay. The battalion was spic and span when it marched out of the town on its way to the parade grounds. It seems that while waiting for the review to start, "Old Sol" disappeared and the sky fell through, rain pouring down on us in torrents. Of course it was an ordinary army review where the men wait from three to four hours for the commanding officer to appear. We waited four hours that day without slickers, the rain drenching our uniforms. When the General came along in his limousine with a retinue of French and British officers, he must have been quite disgusted with us. I'll say we were a sorry army of warriors hiking back to Brachay. The "ninety-day" birds were in a sorrier plight as their thirty-dollar uniforms slowly but surely crawled up their backs from the rain. As soon as we arrived at our billet in Brachay, we started a roaring fire and began to dry our clothes and get warm. That was the end of another perfect day.

The squad, with the exception of our corporal, were seated comfortably around the hearth smoking and talking over old times when some one

knocked at the door. "Details!" that was our first thought as we scrambled for a secret clothes closet in a room next to where the bunks were. Only our brave corporal stood at attention in the reception room awaiting the visitor. The door flew open and a gust of wind blew Hogan, the captain's orderly, into the room. He handed the corporal a slip of paper and left. As I came out of the closet I was handed the note which read as follows:

"Wagoner Sullivan, Vincent F., No. 2584. Report immediately in front of Battery office with all equipment ready for departure from Regiment."

I shall never forget the wild time I had in rolling my pack and getting things together. I had no time to feel sore as everything was coming at me pell-mell, and the only thing really packed was my mess-kit. I was half undressed at the time the note was delivered as my uniform was drying over the fire, neverthless I had to put it on as it was the only one I had. With the aid of Walman and some of the other boys, I managed to get my equipment together and we bustled it down to the square in front of the Company office. Here I met four wagoners, Taribin, Brounie, Farrell and Vandermine, representing Italy, Scotland, Ireland and Holland, all good boys. They informed me they were ordered to wait for a truck which was expected along at any moment. They had not the slightest idea as to where they were going or what they were supposed to do, but they

were ready to be on their way. Finally, the captain came out and explained our mission. The five of us, being chauffeurs, were ordered to Donjeaux for a few weeks where the First Army Artillery Headquarters were located, to drive staff officers who had no chauffeurs. He explained further that we were not being transferred but temporarily detached until our outfit was ready to leave the vicinity for the coast. This we believed to be bunk.

The truck came along and we piled in, meeting five men from the First Battalion for the same duty. They were as sore as we were but nothing could be done to mend matters so we started a crap game inside the truck as we rumbled along on our way to Donjeaux. We searched the town about one o'clock in the morning and we found nary an M. P. to direct us to the Town Major's office, where we expected to find chow and a billet. He was in bed when we did find him and he would not get up to show us where we could put up for the night, not even for General Pershing himself. However, he directed us to the town jail where he thought we would find some bunks that would do us until morning.

The sole occupant of the jail was a Russ, who had escaped from a German prison somewhere and the American Army was taking care of him. He could not speak a word of English, except "Give me a cigarette." We asked him what he did for a living and he replied "Give me a cigarette." The Russ continuously annoyed our

slumber during the remainder of the morning with his siren-like snores. We hopped out of our bunks like trained soldiers on hearing mess-call and there was a wild dash for the M. P. kitchen where we had some wonderful flappers and coffee. Back to the jail and gangs of more sleep. We rose about noon to dine and finishing steak, potatoes and a cigar apiece, we took a lengthy walk around the town. Our buddies from the First Battalion the Frog, Shifty Poe, the Wop, little Georgie, and Princess Pat, were the finest group of men I had the pleasure of meeting while in France. We met the billeting sergeant near General Davis' Headquarters, which were located on the outskirts of the town, and he told us he could fix us up with "something nice." After looking over four or five different town houses, we picked one some fifty feet from the M. P. kitchen. The billet was a beaut, having plenty of good fire wood, a nearby well and ten straw mattresses. We transferred our equipment from the jail to our new home and made a fire, sat around awaiting the orders. We waited, and waited, no orders came. We went to bed having a heavy supper, and still no orders came. Donjeaux did not know we were there, it seemed.

Days passed by. Nobody ever bothered us and we were having the time of our lives. How we loved that billet with its roaring fire and its wonderful conveniences. While sitting around the fire one evening, Princess Pat reminded us that Christmas was but four days off. What a sur-

prise. In the days of the war, few of us thought about the holidays, but now that hostilities had ceased, we felt obligated to celebrate in some sort of way. The following day we met Dunc Murray at the commissary buying huge quantities of cigars and candy. He explained that the Battery intended to squander the mess fund and have a grand Christmas celebration. The captain had already purchased a pair of pigs and also a barrel of beer. That was enough for us and we told him we would be at Brachay on Christmas Day to participate in the offensive on the pigs.

The night before Christmas we did not exactly hang our stockings on the mantel-piece but we received many packages. Farrell brought in a beautiful package from drinking too much "White Mule" and he tossed a fit. We were up till two A.M. trying to bring him to. The Frog was pretty well barrelled but he carried it nicely. The Guinea had a nasty one on so we put him out in the backyard for an hour to cool off.

Christmas morning and everything in the bungalow was on the hop. Shaving, washing, scrubbing and preparing in general to have dinner out of town, as it were. In the midst of our preparations we heard the coughing and spluttering of a Quad just outside the door. Princess Pat went out and jabbered with the chauffeur for some time succeeding in reserving space for ten men going in the direction of Brachay. The Quad was destined for Villiers-sur-Marne, five miles or so south of Brachay, but Pat's eloquence in

the matter changed the course considerably.

We were out in a jiffy with our haversacks on our backs containing our mess-gear, and clambered into the Quad singing "Onward, Christian Soldiers, Onward to a Meal." The ride was a bit chilly but upon arriving at Brachay, we had some twenty-year-old Champagne which helped to warm us up in short time. Every soul in town was celebrating Christmas in good fashion. We certainly had an enjoyable time that day. The meal was a knock-out from the soup to nuts, then a vaudeville show, candy, cigarettes, and to cap it all, three months' pay. What more could a soldier expect for Christmas? Nightfall found us on our way to Donjeaux, the ten of us ready to beat up any M. P. or General who interferred with our singing.

A fast week and New Years. The Frog, Farrell and myself attended the town church New Year's morning. It being Communion Sunday, the pastor came down the aisle with the usual basket of bread cut into small cubes, each member of the congregation taking a piece of the bread as it passed. Farrell, who was moping at the time, saw the basket coming and thinking it collection time dug down into his pocket for some change. As the basket passed him, he hurriedly threw in a franc, much to the amusement of the French people who had witnessed the act. We later had dinner at the Artillery Park kitchen, but it was nothing to compare with our Christmas feast at Brachay, although it was very good.

After the holidays, we began to grow impatient. We had been fed up on rumors about going home and we were tired of it all. Rumors from the Battery were ever encouraging but they would all fall through. A lieutenant from our Battery came down to pay us and to take us to Rouvroy to be cootieized. He explained that the sailing list was being prepared at Brachay and we would be recalled to the Battery within a few days to secure full equipment preparatory for overseas transportation. Like suckers we bit for this yarn and believed him. When he left, the pessimistic part of the billet started to doubt his word and we analyzed our chances of getting home. Poor Shifty was positive he would be in Pittston, Pa., before February 1st, 1919. After a "clear Havana" in our "bathrobes" before the open fire place, we retired, requesting the "maid" to call us before noon the following day. Club life—we called it.

The days went by and still no orders came. After dinner we would take hikes around the surrounding country visiting some towns where American soldiers had never been. The Frog could speak French fluently and he had a great habit of stopping at different farm houses along the road and inquiring of the occupants how their health was and kidding them along in general. One afternoon as the Frog, Farrell and I were hiking along a country road, we came upon a rambling old farm house set well back from the main road. Two dirty children were playing in

the front yard with ragged dolls, the mother standing in the shadow of the doorway looking on. The Frog nudged us and we followed him down the lane to where the children were playing. We could not quite get his idea. Kneeling beside the two youngsters, he exclaimed in his Canadian French, "What wonderful children you are, God Savior! What a blessing you are to your mother whoever she may be." On he raved, the mother taking it all in as she stood in the darkness of the doorway. Finally, she came out into the sunlight, all puffed up with pride. The Frog, upon seeing the woman, bowed deeply, we following his actions as gracefully as possible. Farrell reminded me of Gertrude Hoffman in one of her eccentric dances. However, we got away with it. Two hours later, we left the house, our stomachs filled with chicken, potatoes and wine, the Frog thanking the woman dozens of times for her hospitality.

The next day Van was detailed to take charge of a flivver which the Town Major rode around in at times when was billeting troops. Then the fun began. Instead of hiking every day, the ten of us would pile into the five-passenger fliv and explore in all directions. Not so bad. One night Van decided to run down to Brachay to inquire about the mail and he wanted me to go along, just for the ride. I consented, and Sweet Mama! what a wild dash. We reared and plunged over the slippery roads like a mad steer. Forty miles an hour in the night was play for him. In

and out of the ditch we went, hiting bumps and skidding from five to ten feet at a time. Hills didn't mean a thing to this lad. The crazy Dutchman was laughing like an idiot while I was saying the Rosary with my eyes closed. About a kilo from Brachay, we hit the back of a frog hay wagon and how ever we ricocheted from the side of the road to the field still remains a mystery as I had my eyes closed when we hit, my fingers desperately gripping the cushions. When we climbed out of the fliv, we discovered our lights smashed to pieces and the mudguards bent up like pretzels. We were lucky escaping injury. The lights were the greatest loss to us as we were unable to see a thing beyond ten feet in front of us. With Van pushing and I steering, we managed to get the "can" up on the road and off we dashed again. He was continuously complaining about hard luck, having no lights, but I figured we were quite fortunate in being still conscious. We arrived at Brachay half hour later, got two letters a piece and "hopped off" for Donjeaux.

The next night Van decided to give a birthday party in honor of himself on a twenty-dollar money order he had received from home. During the celebration, which took place in our billet, Princess Pat discovered a cornet in the attic and being quite talented, he rendered us a number of ditties dating as far back as the Civil War, accompanied by Taribin who was playing his mouth organ. Georgie left the billet to get some cheese and he returned with a trap drum that he claimed

he "lifted" from the piano in the village vin-joint. With Taribin's harmonica, Princess Pat's cornet and Georgie's drum we had quite a time. They played from Chopin to Ted Lewis, everything on the score card. We were interrupted about ten o'clock by an orderely from Headquarters who informed us that we were to report to the commanding officer at Villiers-sur-Marne at four o'clock the following morning for convoy work.

CHAPTER XI

Work was a diversion to us until we started to crank the Quads which we were assigned to at Villiers. The rain was coming down fast and my stone-crusher would not budge an inch. However, we managed to get the twenty-odd Quads, which comprised the convoy, "rolling" about nine-thirty A.M., three hours late. I could not seem to get wise to the clutch movement for some time as it was different from an F. W. D., and I was forever hitting the Frog's truck which was directly ahead of mine in line. I had a bumper, of course, and no damage was done. Besides the bumper I had an assistant driver, a fisherman from Cape Cod, his first time on a motor truck. What he was put on the seat for I could never tell you; he wouldn't say a word except when I gave the "victrola" the gas, then he would murmur, "Easy, sonny, easy."

Van and myself having the two last trucks in line, were forever dropping behind the convoy and stopping at different town for eatables. Then we would put on speed and catch the tail end of our convoy, the lientenant in charge who was on the lead truck, not having known we had put one over. While trying to catch up to the convoy one time, I narrowly missed spreading my truck all over the road. Van, the reckless Dutchman, was always driving off the road and bump-

ing trucks "just for the fun of it." It grew dark and we were still on our way, the rain never ceasing. We passed through Colombo where some 77th Division men were billeted. They had a Statue of Liberty painted on a huge sign which hung in front of the Town Hall.

At six P.M., tired, hungry, and drenched through, we arrived at Buzany, where the 55th C. A. C. ordnance shop was located. This was our destination and we were to take ordnance parts to the railhead at Vignory for shipment to the coast. The young lieutenant in charge of our convoy, a very efficient officer, had the cooks of the 55th make some hot stew and coffee for us. It tasted fine. After eating, he ordered us to find shelter in the vicinity and to await two blasts of his whistle.

The Frog, Farrell and I discovered a light burning in a farm house just a few feet from where my truck was parked. The Frog approached the place, knocked on the door and after buzzing with the occupants, he stepped in motioning for us to follow. Ten minutes later found us sitting in front of a roaring fire, munching bread and gargling "Vin Blanc," my namesake. Three pairs of muddy trench shoes were hanging at different angles from the mantle smoking. The Frog was batting about nine hundred in his Canadian-French, telling the aged couple who gave their only boy to the cause, about the wonders of America and its people. He then showed them pictures of the wonderful bridges and buildings of New York and also a picture card of the Aquarium,

which he proudly proclaimed as "Mon Maison."

About eight-thirty we heard the shrill whistle of the lieutenant, and thanking the frogs, went out in the rain to our trucks. Every one seemed anxious to get away and in short order we had the trucks loaded and were waiting for the "Go ahead" signal. At last the whistle blew and we were on our way once more. The truck in back of me had a dazzling headlight and this helped in no little way to keep on the narrow muddy road leading to Vignory. Three hours of tiresome driving brought us alongside the railhead where we were to unload our ordnance material. Vignory was so congested at that time with guns and trucks of every description left there by troops returning home, that we were obliged to wait until daybreak before we could unload. We were rolling the bones in the waiting room of the station with yours truly four hundred francs ahead of the game when the officer in charge of the unloading gang advised us that he was ready to take our cargo.

It was near noon before the trucks were unloaded and in line ready for the twenty-kilo run to Villiers-sur-Marne. As soon as we heard the two blasts of the "Go ahead" signal, each driver shot the gas in good and proper. The lieutenant in charge was feeling fine as we learned from a "triple six" bottle which we found on his truck seat later, and he did not care whether the convoy went off or up the side of a mountain. He was continuously telling the driver of the lead truck to "go faster." Van had the lead truck and this

baby needed no coaxing to go faster. We passed our guns on the way to Vignory for shipment to the coast, and we gave the crews the horse laugh as we dashed past them, half on the road and half in the ditch. Princess Pat was the last in the convoy passing the guns and he misjudged the space between a gun and the ditch which resulted in one of his rear wheels being knocked off. We did not give him a tumble as he stood in the middle of the road frantically waving his arms for a truck to come back to tow him. When we arrived at Villiers, the lieutenant counted the trucks and found three missing. However, we were told to park our trucks where we had found them and that we would then get a Riker to take us to Donjeaux.

Hitting the "ole billet" was like home again and we threw ourselves on our bunks and were soon fast asleep, our muddy shoes still on our feet making a fine mess to clean up in the morning.

January 14th, our club life was brought to an abrupt finish, to our sorrrow. The Town Major informed us that we were to report at Brachay in order to rejoin our Regiment as they expected to leave for the coast within a week. We believed him and there was much hustling as we rolled our packs and prepared to evacuate. At noon that day we clambered aboard a waiting Quad and with our jazz band rendering "Toscin's Farewell," rode jubilantly out of the town.

Arriving at Brachay we were graciously received by the members of the Battery who wel-

comed us in their best manner. They thought our coming back to the outfit was a sure sign that the regiment was leaving for the States in short order. It did not mean a thing, as we were assigned to squads and were out drilling the next day. Same old monotonous army routine, but Oh! Boy! what a drop for us. It seemed like coming from a luxurious life to pauperism in one day. Up at reveille, 7 A.M., every morning when we were used to arising at noon every day came hard, as ten o'clock was an early day for us to arise when we were "clubbing" at Donjaux. However, we were soldiers and in short order we were hitting the hard spots with a laugh and a wise crack.

The Battery's morale was slowly but surely lowering. We were being kidded too much. The Colonel was forever telling us we were on our way home. We knew we were on our way, but how long would it take? Discipline was failing and the junior officers found their positions very trying. School started and we thought it a great joke when we first heard about it. However, it turned out different. The strictest order was enforced and the officers made sure nobody laid down on the job. This resulted in men becoming furious and they preferred drilling rather than attend school. Major Wilbert, who took command of the battalion at this critical time, made several speeches to the men brimming with encouragement. He succeeded in controlling the men somewhat.

The longed-for orders to entrain came when we least expected them. We thoroughly cleaned the town and then prepared for departure to the railhead where we were to entrain for Bordeaux, our embarkation port. We boarded Quads with all our equipment thinking we would be on a transport within a few weeks. We were again jubilant and our morale started to climb to dizzy heights. On the way to the railhead, the truck which our squad was riding in hit a passing Riker's tail end and we landed in a four-foot ditch, our steering rod twisted like a corkscrew. Ed Brody and myself left the scene of disaster and found shelter from the cold January air in a "super six" joint near by, the rest of the squad working on the truck. Our trains were to leave at eleven o'clock, according to official rumor and it was then ten-thirty. We weren't worrying whether we ever did see that station or not after sitting in the café a half hour or so.

Upon hearing the shouts of our comrades outside, we hurriedly left the wine shop taking the glasses with us and forgetting to pay for the drinks. On the road we found the truck the steering gear straightened and everything in order to continue our journey. We arrived at the railhead about ten minutes before twelve and when the troops already assigned to box cars saw us, they let go a wild yell. In short order we hopped aboard a car and then the train pulled out with a long drawn blast of the whistle. The train consisted of twenty American freight cars and a few

coaches for the officers. The cars were in splendid shape as they had plenty of hay strewn about the floors to sleep on. What a difference from the French "40 Homme—Chevaux." There were only thirty of us in our car, including Sergeants Cane and Atter, both good men. We had gangs of eats, including candy and doughnuts. These luxuries were previously purchased out of the mess fund by our farseeing Mess Sergeant, Gus Bowden, himself. We received big cheers along the road from the French country people and many requests for "tabac." We threw our Bull Durham to the four winds and then started giving out corned Willie to the astounding French.

Two days later we arrived at Libourne some fifteen kilos from Bordeaux, but on account of troop congestion our train was forced to take us back to St. Emilion, where we detrained after cleaning the cars. We worked around the station for some time and were then ordered to "fall in" with full packs ready for a short hike.

Then began the memorable "hike to Branne." That march stands out so vividly in my memory I can remember every detail of it, but I dare not write all. In the first place, when we started off, the majority of us were tired from working and standing in line with our packs on; in the second place, we were weak from two days on cold canned food and no exercise, but we marched off pretty good, hitting about one hundred and thirty steps to the minute. Officers having nothing but field glasses to carry were setting the pace. Rumors

no doubt originated by our battalion commander, ran down from man to man that Branne, our destination, was only three and one-half kilos from St. Emilion station. Then everybody was happy. We passed the first three kilos up pretty nice but upon hitting the fourth, inquiries were shooting here and there as to how further we would have to go. Officers were silent. We trudged on until six kilo-stones went by, then the wise cracks started. A few men dropped out exhausted and foot-worn. The men in line did not give the stragglers the razz as they ordinarily would have but passed remarks to their buddies about the officers trying to knock us out. On the eighth kilo, we had a five-minute rest but this only tended to make matters worse when we started off again. After we had passed the tenth kilo, the men went "off the handle" entirely. They were swearing and wisecracking about the army and its inefficiency and dropped out by the dozens. The captain could do nothing to control us—we were "off" that was all. The colonel was trying to make fools of us and he was succeeding partly. The major, a reserve man, was furious when he saw about thirty men drop out of the column as we marched past a wine shop, but what could he do; the men claimed their feet were "gone" and they were unable to hike any further. They laid down on the grass by the side of the road and when the major walked away, they sat up and gave him the famous "horse laugh." Discipline had disappeared almost entirely, which showed how weak

the officers were in their positions of command.

Our squad was pretty well licked as we trudged past the eleventh kilo-stone. We had our shirts and blouses open wide and our dish rags on our shoulders to ease the tugging, pulling pack straps. The soles of our feet were covered with blisters and our canteens were empty. We were looking for a nice place to fall out when our corporal, a hard man to get along with who hailed from Tennessee, pulled a "Chaplin" and laid down on the grass alongside the road. What did that mean? Why, it simply meant that our squad would finish that hike if we hiked the last kilo on crutches in order to give the corporal the razz for falling out. Spite, that was all. How we ever made those last three kilos, I can't quite remember. Bleary-eyed and intoxicated from exhaustion, we straggled into Branne at seven P.M., having trudged nineteen kilos on empty stomachs. The frogs in that town must have thought we were "cuckoo" for as soon as we took our packs off in the public square, we laid down and started to sleep. The captain counted thirty-two men out of the two hundred and forty-one that started from St. Emilion. All that night stragglers came limping into Branne with mighty few good words for our commanding officer.

CHAPTER XII

Life in Branne was quite pleasant. We had some racing events and basket-ball games. The sun was always shining and the weather was wonderful. Still, the men were sore and nasty because of Colonel William Carson's famous "Race for Hoboken" address delivered from the balcony of the Town Hall. He spoke eloquently and masterly about our wonderful discipline and service on and off the firing line. We cheered him like the fools we were and gave him no little hand-claps. He smiled and in his political domineering manner. handed us the greatest line of bunk ever handed American soldiers in France. Three more rousing cheers and dispersement with all the boys declaring that "Bill" was a regular guy after all. The text of his sermon was "Be patient boys, we'll be on our way home in a few weeks." I guess he meant years.

"Ole Boy Walman" was the only kid in our squad who could really "parley" the lingo and he certainly did swing it. He would talk a Frenchman daffy just for a glass of champagne. Many mornings our breakfast consisted of champagne that retailed at $10 per bottle in the States, scrambled eggs and French fried potatoes.

We went crazy as bedbugs when the order came to hit for Bordeaux, twenty-five or more kilos away, and embark for America. When we laid

our eyes on a score of big Liberty trucks which were to take us to the embarkation camp, we were sure the hoodoo was off the regiment and we were really homeward bound. Not so bad—not so bad, only fifteen men to a big Liberty. Did we cheer the inhabitants of Branne as we clambered into the trucks? I'll wail to the globe we did.

On January 24th, about ten thirty A.M., the 58th left Branne for Bordeaux and a transport. Did our hopes sink when upon entering the camp at Bordeaux we were told that we were the artillery outfit that was expected to relieve a colored regiment from stevedore work? No! That could only be a joke; artillery troops from the front to do stevedore work—ha! ha! what a huge joke. Men wounded, gassed and sick from exposure to throw cases around on some fool docks when there were over eighty thousand men who never had a gasmask on lying around the big S. O. S. depots doing nothing. What a joke. Why, we were booked to sail on a steamer leaving Bordeaux about February 8th. A few days in a louse house and we would be off on the briny deep, bound for Hoboken. "Smiling Bill" Carson made another dramatic speech before we entered the camp, explaining that on account of the troop congestion at Camp No. 1 we would be forced to stay in tents near Bassens Docks for three or four days to await our turn to be cootieized. In the meantime, however, he would use his influence to skip other outfits on the waiting list for Camp No. 1. After the oration, he bowed deeply, his wis-

ning smile bringing forth a scattered applause.

On the way to the tents some one said our colonel was a rank four-flusher. Dinty Moore claimed "Bill" ran for Governor of Nebraska in 1901 and tried to buy votes on a street corner for a dollar a piece. "Buffalo Joe" said Carson served bar in a picnic park in Nebraska after his defeat at the polls. Piece by piece, we gathered the pre-war history of our colonel from the solemn westerners who knew him before he started his brilliant career in the army. We came to a conclusion that "Smiling Bill" was nothing but a nature-faking, slew-footed, anarchistic imbecile. He was worse than the Kaiser in his darkest moments. He dashed past us in his car as we hiked our way towards the Bassen tents and we greeted him with some timely and rather profanic expressions. He never gave us a tumble; he had the laugh on us. When we arrived at the tents, we found to our dismay that we were relieving a regiment of colored stevedores who were ordered to the States. Sweet cookie! What a fall. What a beating. We swore revenge on our commander that very night.

We could hardly believe it at first. The colored regiment was to work three more days and then blimp for America. They told us they had been expecting us for the last three weeks and they wanted to know what had delayed us as it meant delay for them in getting away. They also told us of horrible brutalities working all night on the docks with only coffee and bread in their

stomachs and how officers forced sick men to lug flour on their backs. They claimed it was dog treatment. German prisoners worked eight hours a day and our stevedores had been forced to work from twelve hours to sometimes sixteen hours out of twenty-four. We believed these colored lads. Ah! the dock officers could make these ignorant negroes from the South kill themselves with work, but, Oh, boy! wait until they try to man-handle the artillery from New York. We would show them something.

The very next morning we turned out in Battery formation arrayed in fatigue clothes which consisted of a blue or brown denim blouse and overalls and a small denim work-hat. We could not quite fathom the idea of the regimental band in formation at the head of the batteries with their instruments ready for use. At last the command "Squads Right" was given and the regiment marched out of camp, the band striking up "Over There." A regular "Keystone Comedy." "Smiling Bill" who was at the head of the column reminded me of a Keystone Kop. What a terrible beating we took as we passed the negro camps on the way down to the docks. From that day on, we were officially known as Carson's Army Circus.

Upon arriving at the American Docks, we were amazed at the wonderful warehouses and steel cranes which had kept our troops supplied with foodstuffs and clothing during the war. American engineers had accomplished the impossible when they erected twelve steel warehouses in six

months, French autnorities claiming it would take from two to three years.

But that first morning on the docks—that was the biggest joke of all. Our Battery was put to work loading feed in a warehouse from railroad cars to warehouses. The officers in charge of the detail took check of the men at eleven A.M. Out of two hundred and thirty men, twenty-three were working. Where were the missing two hundred and seven men? I knew where one was, lying up on top of the feedbags which were stacked about one hundred feet in height, looking down on the men who were working. Beside me, lie some twelve tired young soldiers. All around me I could discern forms crawling around in the semi-darkness laughing and passing wise cracks about our officers trying to make us work.

At twelve A.M., we crawled out of hiding and climbed down the stack of bags to the floor. Two hundred and thirty men were counted when we marched off for dinner. How that word "dinner" rasps when we received only salmon and bread with "tobacco juice" for coffee. To cap it all, we had to march three kilos to get fed and no time for a smoke. At one o'clock we were up on the bags again asleep. There was so much confusion and so many men from the regiments working about the docks and warehouses, they could not keep track of us. We stalled and stalled and few of us ever worked. Somehow the dock officers could not get us to work and our own junior officers did not care whether we did or not as they were as

sore at the colonel as we were. Lieutenant Ross, a real white man, treated us wonderfully. He never said a word to us for loafing unless the colonel would come along looking over things. Then we were forced to look busy but as soon as "Bill" went along, Ross called "rest."

The second afternoon of "labor" our gang discovered a new place to stall. This haven was the best we ever hit—the American Red Cross canteen where coffee and sandwiches could be had. What wonderful work this organization accomplished in France. Their deeds of kindness were certainly appreciated by the boys and I am sure the Red Cross will never be in want for funds to carry on their work in peace as they did in war.

That same afternoon we were loitering about the pier when a battalion of "three-month men" were being marched to a gangway to embark on the S. S. "J. W. Luckenback." Seeing us loitering on the docks and thinking we were S. O. S. troops, they started to ridicule us, calling us slackers and yellow babies for stevedoring and trying to duck the firing line What could we do? Swallow it, at the same time wishing the ship would sink in mid-ocean.

That night our Battery was stopped at the gates on the way to our barracks by the Marine guard to be searched. It seems the guard had the privilege of searching anyone leaving the docks who looked suspicious. They picked on us. American soldiers with absolutely nothing against their records were forced to submit to a bunch of boot

Marines going over their persons. It seemed outrageous to us but we could do nothing. What a bunch of snobs were in those two Marine Regiments stationed at Bordeaux; boys about eighteen and nineteen years old, fit for nothing more than S. O. S. guard duty, trying to live on the reputation of the 5th and 6th Marines, valiant heroes of Chateau Thiery.

After the first night's "hold up," as we called it, we swore revenge on them. They may have been nice lads before they entered the service but they had the Marine gag drilled into them. Their officers told them they were better than the American soldiers and they really believed it.

A few nights later a youthful marine was rescued from the Gironde River by the crew of the hospital ship "Mercy." He claimed that a member of our outfit had thrown him off the dock because he tried to stop the artilleryman from smoking. It was impossible for the marine to identify his man so the whole matter was dropped.

Things were getting worse instead of improving. The crisis came when the Quarter Master Department issued oil skins, hip boots and sou' westers. This regalia was the uniform of the Chinese coolies who were employed by the Government for road mending. Some men absolutely refused to wear the uniform and they were promtly jailed. Others swore deep revenge on the colonel and his followers. One of the wilder birds pulled a "Wm. S. Hart" and went out after the colonel with a loaded gat. What was it all com-

ing to? Discipline was shot to pieces. Everything was slovenly done. Details were hard to find. The regiment had the honor of having two hundred and sixty-seven men in the guard house, forty-seven A. W. O. L., and twice that number in the hospital. It didn't mean a thing to the colonel. He was receiving extra overseas pay for every day he kept us on foreign soil.

The days went by very slowly. Five bells every morning we turned out in denims and were hurried off to the docks where we worked till noon. After a light luncheon we were back on the job until six. By this time letters which had evaded the censor arrived in New York and the newspapers began to hop on Washington about the New York Artillery Regiment being held in France. This didn't mean a thing to us though, as we were still on the job.

The climax came when we were ordered to move after a hard day's work, from the tents to the stevedore billets, previously occupied by some stinking diseased Chinese coolies who hailed from South Africa. As soon as we were installed in these louse-houses, the colonel issued eight hour passes for us to visit the city of Bordeaux. Men received passes and were never heard from again. Gilburn and I went to Bordeaux to look around. The city was even faster than Paris; for her women indeed, this southern seaport may well blush. The number of most irresistably attractive women on the street who accosted us at almost every corner was amazing. We counted sixteen

who spoke to us within a half hour. I remember distinctly a remarkable flapper arrayed like a million francs who withered me completely with an outburst of profanity and shocking language in which I could see mirrored an American soldier who had taught her some English. Women have greater power than they exert with their knitting needles; they can move armies. It was the women of Bordeaux who caused loss of so many men from our outfit and the curtailment of passes.

The Y. M. C. A. had a small one-cylinder movie show in camp and it was here all the anarchists had their nightly meetings. They were called the "Try and get home" club. The colonel and his staff would strut up the aisle before the show and take front seats amidst hisses and wise cracks, profanity and insults. The fun would start when the lights were extinguished for the movies to start. Our opening chorus was that beautiful little doughboy ballad entitled, "Victory," running something like this:

> We chased the Boche across the Rhine,
> We knocked the Kaiser from his throne;
> Oh, Lafayette, we paid our debt,
> For —— sake, send us home!

Then you would hear a voice in the darkness yell, "Man overboard!" Another voice would shout, "Who is he?" Answer, "The colonel!" Then there would be a chorus of voices, "Throw him an anchor or throw him a hand grenade." The colonel was the object of all our derision, and

when the lights were turned on he would look around at us, his famous smile covering his face. He had it on us and he knew it. Our chaplain was our only support. We learned later he had been diligently fighting the commanding officer to let us go home but his rank could not sway the colonel as he was only a lieutenant.

A few days later it leaked out that the colonel was to be reduced to the rank of captain as soon as he arrived in New York. So that was his purpose for keeping us in France. Did we ride him in the movies? Well, I should stutter. We went at him so strong, he threatened to have the camp put under guard. That's what we wanted.

February was a black month for us. Several of our buddies were laid low by accident while working around the docks. I can not recall the name of the youngster who had his back broken by a bag of flour which had fallen on him from the top of a stack. The brightest thing that month was the dinner on the S. S. "Monongehela." Hot dogs! What a banquet. The sailors claimed the meal was pretty poor. We wrote home about it, we thought it so wonderful.

It seems the colonel declared a half holiday one Sunday to clean our equipment. General Pershing was expected the following Tuesday and we were to be reviewed. We hotfooted back to our louse-houses from the docks and were ordered to "clean up" or in the coop we would go. We were disgusted. Remarks in vogue were "Who ever heard of Pershing?" "Who is he?" "Why don't

he get us out of here?" Those were mild in comparison to some. I am sort of leary about writing the stronger ones and besides, I am a fond admirer of General Pershing's.

We had a practice parade on Monday and we fell down on it purposely when the parade got under way. We looked like a skirmish line of "coolies" while marching in battery front formation past the colonel who was reviewing us. He was as sore as a hornet and made all sorts of threats against us. We were used to threats.

The following morning the outfit turned out in "dress" uniform and fixed bayonets and belts as white as starch. At 6:30 we were on our way to the docks where the review was to take place, the colonel leading with his famous fish band on his heels. Wise cracks were passed along the line and when we marched past the marine guard camp, they gave us the razz good and proper. I will admit we were marching like rookies but why? This was the first parade we had had in months and we were all out of marching form. What could one expect? Besides, we did not want to parade and that means a lot. Well, we waited in the rain from seven until eleven and then along came "John." He must have had half the first army with him as his staff. He had more automobiles with him than officers and he had some flock of officers, I'll say. However, he made a wonderful appearance before us and all the men liked him. Instead of marching in review before the general, we were ordered to "open ranks and

prepare for inspection." Pershing then walked up and down in front of each Battery, stopping here and there to speak to different individuals, quite democratically. Having inspected the entire regiment, he made a short speech wherein he told us that we were booked for home in short order. We believed him. He also told us how the American people appreciated our work at the front, and how our reward awaited us in America. After this oration, he inspected the docks and warehouses and we went "stumbling" home, wet to the skin, our rifles coated with rust, disgusted with everything especially the salmon we had for mess.

That night our chaplain explained to us that he had had a conference with the S. O. S. authorities and they were going to send an inspector to the camp to check up on the spirit of the men and to find out the cause for our low morale. With this information on hand, we prepared for the inspector. The next morning bright and early, we had over a dozen fellows with bamboo poles "fishing" in the malaria holes which were filled with dirty muddy water, supposedly cuckoo, that's all. Others were reciting Christmas poems on the roofs of the billets. A crowd of "would be" maniacs was gathered in the movie house singing funeral songs and ditties about our regimental leader. We had Al. Garry running about the camp dressed in a German uniform with a mob on his heels with rifles yelling that he was an escaped German prisoner. At a very critical moment in

strutted a major from Bordeaux on the inspection tour. Sweet canaries! When he saw the men with the fishing poles, his face turned a rainbow lavender. He did not know what to say. As soon as the men saw that he was the inspector, they started howling, "We're loco, we're crazy, take us out of this hole. We're dying like flies." Such was the line of bunk we handed him. Did he fall? Well, I should scream, and heavy, too. After a hurried conversation with the colonel, he blimped off for Bordeaux. Three days later the regiment was relieved of dock duty and we prepared for entrance to Embarkation Camp No. 1.

On April 2nd, we went through a grilling hike up the hill overlooking the sluggish Gironde, on our way to No. 1. It was a mean hike and the sun beat down on us causing a lot of discomfort. Towards the end of the hike the sun took the gate and rain poured down on us in torrents. More than one had a cold the next day.

Upon arriving at the camp, we had our first meeting with the 11th Engineers. They were a fine bunch of men the majority being one hundred per cent New Yorkers with eighteen months active service in France, the boys who fought the Jerrys with shovels at Cambrai. Wonderful men, everyone of them and didn't give a rap for the best "Sam Brown" in the A. E. F. They took a liking to our outfit because we were from New York and we had plenty of francs. They even liked us better after we lost our pay to them in

Faro and Klondike. We got along fine, however, and had no fights.

The shows in camp were pretty fair but not worth telling the folks at home about and we were glad when we received orders to leave for Camp No. 2.

Embarkation Camp No. 2 was the Delousing Camp and the last hop-off pavilion for the States. In this camp we had wonderful amusements with an assortment of Y. M. C. A., Salvation Army and Jewish Welfare League huts keeping us entertained while we waited our chance to be packed and shipped to America. I dare not mention the ordeal we went through in the delouser. I want to forget all that, especially the shave with a tin safety razor and no soap nor water. The less written about it, the better.

Sewell, O'Brien and a gang of jazz-hounds formed a little burlesque on the regimental show, "The Whizbangs." We put it over pretty well at the J. W. B. hut and we then decided to play all the welfare huts. It pulled big in the Salvation Army hut because we had a Victrola behind the scenes on which we produced some of the finest of Irish opera. In the Y. M. hut No. 2 we did not fare so well as one of our acrobats did a handflip, pure accident of course, and he landed off the stage pulling the scenery and movie curtain after him. Morgan tried to deliver Toscin's "Farewell" amidst the confusion in order to hold the audience for the collection. We always passed a cootie catcher through the audience to get cocoa

money for the actors but this time the crowd sauntered out without giving us a tumble and we had no cocoa money.

April 3rd was scheduled to be a knockout in Bordeaux soldier theatricals. The "Whizbang Burlesquers" were booked to play at the Victory Theatre, which was the largest army show house in France. Posters were put up everywhere and Sewell delivered some eloquent orations from battery washstands boosting the actors and the coming show. It was to be without doubt, the most masterful production ever put on by soldier talent in Europe. Reny was as busy as a one-armed paper hanger with the hives getting the costumes and writing up the lines.

April 3rd finally came and the show was to be put on at 2 P.M. As early as 12:30 troops were charging towards the "Victory" anxious to secure front seats and boxes of the theatre. One thirty—standing room only with M. P.'s keeping the crowds out. At 1:45 the show boys with Sewell leading, steamed up the side aisle headed for the stage door. O'Brien closed up the rear with a violin case under one arm and a dirty looking dog under the other. The audience shook the house with applause, Sewell majestically bowing as he reached the top of the steps leading to the stage entrance. Three minutes before the curtain was scheduled to rise, we found we had no piano player, Reny, our coach, was missing and we had no "parts"—the jazzband was placed on K. P. the last moment and the costumes were stolen by

some sorehead member of the original "Whiz-bangs." Otherwise, the show was ready to start. The same state of affairs existed at 2:10 and some of the audience started clapping. At 2:30 the audience changed to a mob of hoodlums, stamping their hob nails and whistling for the show to come on. Behind the scenes everything was a mass of confusion and disorder. Nobody seemed to be in charge and no one had nerve enough to venture out on the stage to announce a postponment of the show. One by one the chorus slipped out the back door. What could be done? O'Brien suddenly smiled, then laughed, spoke to Sewell for a minute and then hopped out on the stage, the audience applauding heavily—then quiet reigned.

O'Brien bowed and with a drawn out, presidential cough started to speak in a deep base voice.

"Thank you, my dear fellow-soldiers and heroes, I deeply regret you gentlemen having to wait so long for our production but I will waste no more time making apologies. I am sure you will be pleased with our first number, Senor Edwardo Leopold Stewartoli, an ambitious Italian violinist." O'Brien then waited in embarrassment for several moments one hand pointing to the curtain, the other held in the air. Sewell slipped out of one of the folds of the curtain, a high hat set rakishly on his dome, violin case under his arm and the meat-hound tied to his legging strap. His foolish grin with hanging jaw won the audience from the start. When the ap-

plause subdued, O'Brien continued, his hand resting gently on Sewell's back.

"Senor Stewartoli played recently before the crowned heads of Europe and after much coaxing, he has consented to play before a soldier audience. He is a forceful performer on the instrument, zealous in all his readings and earnest in his efforts. His program will begin with the Bach-Taussig Taccata and Tugne in "D" minor. The list will range from the classic technical test to a pretty poem by Mana Zucca Zucca and from a typical Mendelssohn example to four exotic rhapsodies by Dohanani,ji. Besides these, Senor Stewartoli will be heard in "Orientale" by Amani; a ballad and a dance by DeBusoy, "The Garden of Sympathy" and "Souls" by Scott; a colonial song and a paraphrase on Tscharkowsky's Flower Song by Graingn. I am sure you will be pleased with the program."

The speech seemed to daze most of the crowd and they applauded wildly as O'Brien bowed himself off the stage, leaving Sewell to his misery. "Ole Boy Eddie" was never in a tighter fix in all his life. He uttered something that sounded like Patrick Henry's last speech, as he fumbled with the catch on the violin case. The audience was anxious and intense. The sun's rays could be heard beating a death march on the roof. Silence reigned otherwise. Sewell suddenly opened the case and a ten cent harmonica clattered to the floor breaking the death-like silence. He immediately picked it up and started playing "Darktown

Strutters' Ball." It didn't go. Didn't pull at all. The audience again changed to a mob of man-killers. There was much gnashing of teeth and Indian yells, wild western howls and all sorts of bellows. Bzzzz—something was coming Sewell's way and the poor kid must have thought it was a hand grenade the way he dove for the exit. As a matter of fact, it was only a spiked field shoe. In the wild confusion that followed, I dove for an exit and made haste towards my barrack.

We were lying on our bunks talking over the whole "fizzle" when Ed. the poor but honest fiddler, dashed in breathless and covered with mud from head to foot. Without a word to say, he jumped into his bunk and covered his head with a blanket. That evening after mess more than two hundred angry inhabitants of Camp No. 2 prowled around our billet looking for Senor Stewartoli. They were singing a pretty ballad written by the National Casket Company entitled, "I hear you calling me." Bricks began falling on our billet when the mob found that Sewell would not show his figure. They became so riotus that the M. P. reserve was called out and a general dispersement followed. For many days, Sewell laid low around Camp No. 2.

Our regiment had a fairly good baseball team and we bet heavily on each game they played. In this manner, we succeeded in getting back some of the francs we lost to the different regiments on their Faro and Klondike games. There was no little rivalry between the 18th Engineers and our

outfit and we were very sore when they licked our boys.

Between sports and vaudeville shows the colonel tried to hold our morale up but it was beginning to dwindle once more—we wanted to go home, that was all.

I happened to meet an "ole one-stepper from Brooklyn" Jimmy Wellings, one time supporter of the Parisiene and Arcadia dance halls. He was a very close friend of Viola Delman and he showed me some pictures of her in stage costume. Jimmy and I had a couple of good dances together at a "ball" in the Victory Theatre. The "ball" was given under the auspices of the Y. M. C. A. There were six Y. M. girls, twelve army nurses and eighteen hundred soldiers in attendance. There were not quite enough girls to go around so Jimmy and I had to dance stag. Had a fairly good time with gangs of crackers and lemonade. We did not double upon the crackers we went around in a continuous circle.

April 15th we turned out at 6:30 A.M. for parade which was to take place in Bordeaux in honor of Marshal Petain who was to arrive in the city, presumably to inspect the American docks and warehouses, the purchase of which was contemplated by the French Government. That morning I was bawled out by the skipper for having a dirty uniform and I was told to go on K. P., thus missing the parade. But I had the horse laugh on the rest of the men when they came back from Bordeaux. They waited three hours in formation

for "ole boy Pete." When he did arrive, he didn't give our outfit a rumble.

Every second day Battery C was called upon to furnish a detail to clean camp or to do carpenter work. We generally turned out after reveille every morning for the top kicker to pick his men. One fine morning one of the wise cracking second loots took charge of the Battery. We knew something was in the wind and we were ready for him. He stood out in front of the assembled battery and after a lot of the ordinary foolish talk, ordered all typists, bookkeepers and clerks to step one pace forward. With the exception of three men, the entire Battery stepped forward each man thinking he could duck the "clean up detail" by working in the Battery office. The lieutenant bawled out:

"All you men are clerks of some kind or other, therefore, you need some healthy exercise. Report in denims within fifteen minutes to dig sewers."

What a beating we took. We were digging about an hour when a courier came along with orders for the regiment's details to turn in immediately as the outfit was scheduled to sail within two days. Being the eightieth time we had heard this rumor, at first took it for a joke and not one of us believed it until the Chaplain came along and confirmed the report. Nobody slept that night nor the next. We had speeches, cognac, cheers, fights, games and all sorts of what nots in our wild dilemma.

On the night of April 14th 1919, the regiment

marched down the winding roadway leading to the docks where our transport lay waiting for us. That was our last hike in France and I am almost positive not one of us howled or kicked about our packs or rifles. Down past the old Genicart motor park we marched, past the stevedore billets, nearly deserted now, each man with his thoughts on a big girl swinging a torch in New York Harbor and another girl at home patiently looking towards Europe.

When we hit the Marine Guard camp, we "rode" them unmercifully, calling them everything they were not and telling them they were a disgrace to the 5th and 6th Marines, those noble heroes of Belleaux and Vaux. The "boots" were glad when our forms faded in the heavy mist, never more to bother them again. Into the rest room of the Red Cross we marched, the same old barracks where we use to stall and have coffee and sandwiches while on stevedore work. The girls treated us royally as they had remembered us from working around the docks two months previous. All the appreciation we could show for their kindness was with our cheers, and cheer we did. Our cheers shook the very rafters until they rattled like a mighty thunderclap.

When we finally marched out on to the dock and saw the "can" we were going to cross the lake in, our spirits dropped. She was the "Santa Barbara," an old Grace Liner. Before the war when I was in the employ of the Texas Oil Company, I shipped gasoline on her to South America and I

recalled that the Insurance Companies would charge high premiums on account of the unseaworthiness of this boat. She was a little larger than a New York Harbor sight-seeing yacht and she lay very low in the water—our hearts were the same. Most of us were sore to think we had made the bloomin' war and then have to take a fifty-to-one chance of making the ocean on a tin can like the "Santa Barbara." Nevertheless, we did not hesitate to march aboard and secure bunks, and were pleasantly surprised to find that each man was entitled to a bunk.

The next morning, April 15th, the "Santa Barbara" steamed slowly down the Gironde River, the "Chicago" with the 11th Engineers on board close behind.

My gentle reader, why take up your time explaining to you this sea voyage to America. I could quote some of the "Ancient Mariner" in these pages but you well-read folk care not for such repetition. It was the sea, sea, sea—deep and mysterious, rough and sickening. It was nothing like "going over." There was no need for silence now nor of boat drills in the early morning. No target practice or submarine scares. There was no excitement. Of course, we enjoyed ourselves, lying in the sun on deck eight hours every day, listening to a victrola putting over Al Jolson's "Rock-a-bye." It was a pleasure trip, except for the eats. We had an abundance of garbage which the sailors use to throw outside the galley, but we longed for something

good to eat on a white plate with a knife and fork. Whenever the sailors put out their leavings, the men would fill their hats with spuds or whatever they had and go in some dark corner to eat undisturbed. Outside of that, the trip was excellent. I dare not try to remember the storm nor my stomach when everything went over the rail save my clothes.

However, on the twelfth day from France, we hit old Ambrosia, the lightship off New York. From then on there was a craning of necks looking for the Statue of Liberty—that was our quest. Once we saw the "ole girl" everything would be gravy; only then would we be sure we were home once more. Soldiers were already swarming up the rigging and climbing on top of the galleys. I do not believe there was one soldier below decks when the "Santa Barbara" steamed in sight of the Rockaways. We passed several big craft coming out, one of them, the battleship "Wyoming" gave us a big hand.

Time passed so rapidly that before we realized it, we passed the Forts and were well up the bay. Several tugs and barges were making for us, the people on them waving flags and shouting hysterically. One tug had on board the Mayor's Welcome Committee, and the happy mob was shouting and bawling above the din of the bands of music. We did not know what it was all about, where we were, or what to do. The people then started throwing fruit at the sides of our boat. No brains.

By this time we were well up the river and in short order we were docked at one of the army transport piers at South Brooklyn, among several other transports. Well, I shall never forget that pie and coffee the Red Cross gave us upon hitting the dock. "Delicious" would be putting it mildly, and after the pie came cigars or cigarettes; more pie, then candy, chewing gum and cake. It seemed to me the welfare organizations were trying to play a trump card in front of our relatives. We never received this abundance of gratis on the other side when we really needed it. But we had no time for such thoughts and we were really happy and glad to get home. Things were flying our way.

From the dock we were hustled and bustled aboard a ferry boat which took us to the Ferry Terminal at Long Island City. Here were gathered some more "Welcomers" and I saw Johnny Morton and a few other wounded fellows from the outfit, already discharged.

Yaphank. What a wonderful camp it was with its spacious buildings, amusement centres, welfare organizations, and best of all, spring beds. The draftees used to kick about that "barren waste of land." Some of them went as far as to commit suicide on account of the horrible conditions existing when the camp was in its infancy. It was a wonder city to us with all the improvements of a metropolis.

It was certainly queer how the somewhat rigid discipline of the army faded away when we ar-

rived at this camp. Officers did not mean a thing to us. Men absolutely refused to get out of their bunks before ten A.M. Everything was done in a slipshod way. Sergeants suddenly fell down from their lofty pedestals and gambled with the "bucks." Sergeant Coslen, one of the meanest sneaks east of the Rockies, and by the way, my personal enemy, began to get leary about his safe return to his home. I guess he wanted to live to the end of his natural life. Only thirty men out of the Battery were supposed to go out on pass the first week-end; the whole outfit marched out the gate, never giving the guard a tumble. We were in camp five days when the men started growling about being discharged. The fools wanted to be discharged so they could go back to work. The intelligent personnel of the Battery did not care whether they were held for four more years or not. They were taking life easy, eating heavily and going out on pass regularly. Drawing our pay was embarrassing as we had not earned it; my conscience hurt to accept it on pay day.

Of course, everything good ends quickly. The Army threw us out in the cold on the fatal day of May 7th, 1919. Threw us out bodily with a piece of paper in one hand and a sixty-dollar bonus in the other; didn't even say "thank you" for our services. Those sixty gumdrops went towards buying a pair of shoes—and the discharge. I tried to exchange it for a cigarette on the train but my victim thought I was trying to swindle him.

I can not say that that discharge didn't mean

a thing to me for it did and it meant a whole lot. It meant two of my most valuable years in life gone; thrown away like a burnt match. I found myself outside in the cold world with sixty-odd dollars, one O. D. uniform, a wonderful appetite and an all too vivid imagination. My brain was as scattered as England's colonies. I was not fit to work in an office—couldn't even count how much money I owed.

Well, I tossed the bottle of milk on the sidewalk and what was the use of crying about it. Oh! wothehel, I could go to the Old Soldiers' Home in a few years. I swore I would never answer the call to the colors if the nation succeeding in cooking up another war, but I am sure should our Country see fit to call upon us again, we would all answer the call as we did in that perilous period of 1917-18. Yes, we would go with the same old Yank spirit and determination, for, after all, is it not our country, our folks and our homes we are protecting?

Finis.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper proce
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date
MAY 2001
Preservation Technologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATI

HECKMAN
BINDERY INC.
JUN 89
N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA 46962